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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to explore contemporary early childhood educational practices related to self-esteem and to distinguish self-esteem from narcissism. After discussing practices and materials that are intended to foster self-esteem but may contribute to self-preoccupation, the essay examines some of the distinctions between self-esteem and narcissism and their relationship to child development, and discusses several factors to consider when developing appropriate practices to foster genuine self-esteem in children. Self-esteem cannot be achieved through direct instruction or exhortations to "feel good" about oneself. Teachers are more likely to foster healthy self-esteem when they help children cope with occasional negative feedback, frustration, and reverses. Children are likely to enhance their sense of self-confidence and self-worth when the learning environment provides a wide variety of activities and tasks, when they have opportunities to make meaningful decisions and choices, and when optimum challenge rather than quick and easy success is available. Contains 37 references, as well as an annotated bibliography of 47 documents and 40 journal articles available through the ERIC database that address self-esteem in children, adolescents, and young adults. General information about the ERIC system and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education is also included. (MDM)

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Distinctions between Self-Esteem and Narcissism: Implications for Practice

by Lilian G. Katz

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary Early Childhood Education

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Distinctions between Self-Esteem and Narcissism: Implications for Practice

by

Lilian G. Katz, Ph. D.
Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education

Professor, Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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ERIC/EECE
University of Illinois
805 W. Pennsylvania
Urbana, IL 61801
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Fax: 217-333-3767
Email:ericeece@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu

Distinctions between Self-Esteem and Narcissism: Implications for Practice

LILIAN G. KATZ
Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary
and Early Childhood Education
Professor, Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Urbana, Illinois

Introduction

A solitary poster in the cafeteria of a small northeastern school recently caught my attention. The top line of the poster, written in large letters, read,

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR

with the word "yourself" underlined as above. Just below the top line was written,

COMPLIMENT SOMEONE TODAY!

The center of the poster featured a cartoon depicting a smiling rabbit closely resembling Bugs Bunny, wielding a paint brush and dripping yellow paint on itself while painting a large sunburst. The words issuing from the rabbit's mouth said,

IT'S HARD TO SPREAD SUNSHINE WITHOUT
SPILLING A LITTLE ON YOURSELF!

The feature of this poster that provoked this discussion is that its message specifically urges readers to compliment others as a

favor to *oneself*, rather than as an act of kindness and charity toward *others*. The message implies that a major motive for "doing good" is that such acts spill onto oneself, thus making the person paying the compliment feel good. The poster explicitly turns the attention of cafeteria users inward toward their own feelings, rather than outward to concern for others. Yet the latter would be a more appropriate message, urging altruism rather than narcissism. In this way, the poster exemplifies a wider trend in early childhood and elementary school practices that seem to confuse narcissism and the important goal of strengthening children's self-esteem.

A central argument of this essay is that a characteristic of current early childhood education practices which is exemplified by the poster provides environments for young children that are at best unreal and at worst phony rather than authentic, fanciful rather than imaginative, and more amusing and entertaining than interesting and intellectually challenging. Commendable as it is for children to have high self-esteem, many of the practices advocated in the service of this goal may inadvertently develop narcissism in the form of excessive preoccupation with oneself instead of a deep and meaningful sense of self-confidence and self-worth. The fact that the poster's message is issued by a cartoon animal character, another common feature of early childhood practices, further undermines the intellectual vitality of early childhood environments.

The major purpose of this essay is to explore contemporary early childhood educational practices related to self-esteem and narcissism. I begin with examples of the practices in question, continue with a discussion of definitional problems associated with self-esteem and their implications for practice, then consider specific practices, and close with some examples of the uses and misuses of enchantment and their implications for practice.

But first, brief working definitions of self-esteem and narcissism are offered. Self-esteem refers to feelings derived from evaluations of the self. Narcissism is a preoccupation with oneself and how one is seen by others. These terms are discussed in greater detail in a later section.

Self-Esteem as a Goal of Early Childhood Education

The development and strengthening of the young child's self-esteem is typically listed as a major goal in the guides for state and school district kindergarten curricula. While early childhood education has long been blessed with many curriculum approaches that emphasize and advocate diverse goals and methods, all seem to concur that helping children to "feel good about themselves" is an important goal of early education. The terms applied to this goal are variously designated as self-esteem, self-regard, self-concept, self-worth, and self-confidence. Frequently, the phrase *positive self-concept* is used, even though, semantically speaking, a concept cannot be positive or negative. Some sources refer to *high self-concepts*, even though a concept cannot, technically speaking, be high or low. The term *self-esteem* is preferred because it refers to a calibrated estimation of the value or worthiness of the self.

For example, in a document titled *Early Childhood Education and the Elementary School Principal*, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1990) issued "Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children." The first on the list of twelve characteristics of quality early childhood programs is that children "develop a positive self-image" (p. 2).

Numerous books, kits, packets, and newsletters produced for teachers urge them to help children gain "positive self-concepts." A typical example of this view is given by Sandy McDaniel (1986) as quoted in the National Education Association's *NewOptions:*

> [T]he basis for *everything we do* is self-esteem. Therefore, if we can do something to give children a stronger sense of themselves, starting in preschool, they'll be [wiser] in the choices they make. (p. 1)

Along similar lines, the prestigious Corporation for Public Broadcasting (no date) issued a twenty-page pamphlet, apparently directed to teenagers, entitled *Celebrate Yourself: Six Steps to Building Your Self-Esteem*. The first major heading in the pamphlet is "Learn to Love Yourself Again." This section asserts that we all loved ourselves as babies, but as we grew up "we found that not

everyone liked everything we did" (p. 1), so we "started picking on ourselves." Six steps toward self-celebration are presented. Step 1 is "Spot Your Self-Attacks." Step 2, "See What Makes You Special," recommends that the reader compile a list of items that relate to "My Character" (such as "awesome"), "My Talents" (such as "playing trivia"), and so forth. The remaining four steps toward self-celebration are "Attack your Self-Attacks," "Make Loving Yourself a Habit," "Go for the Goal," and "Lend a Hand to Others."

Perhaps it is just this kind of literature that accounts for the presence of a large poster in the entrance hall of a suburban school, with the declaration "We applaud ourselves" surrounded by pictures of clapping hands! While the purpose of the sign might have been to help children "feel good about themselves," it does so by directing their attention inward and urging self-congratulation. The poster makes no reference to other ways of deserving applause, for example, by considering the feelings or needs of others. Many schools also feature posters listing the Citizen of the Week, Person of the Week, Super Spellers, Handwriting Honors, and similar displays that often seem to encourage showing off.

Similarly, over the principal's office in an urban elementary school a sign says, "Watch your behavior, you are on display!" While its purpose may be to encourage appropriate conduct, it does so by directing children's attention to how they *appear* to others rather than to any possible functions of appropriate behavior. The examples listed above exemplify a confusion between self-esteem and narcissism.

Early Childhood Practices: Narcissism versus Self-Esteem

The possibility of confusing self-esteem and narcissism is exemplified in a practice observed in a first grade class in a suburban elementary school. Each child had produced a booklet titled "All About Me," consisting of dittoed pages prepared by the teacher, on which the child had provided information about himself or herself. The first page asked for a list of basic information about the child's home and family. The second page was titled "What I like to eat," the third "What I like to watch on TV," the next "What I want for a present," another "Where I want to go on vacation,"

and so forth. On each page the child's attention was directed toward his or her own inner gratifications. The topic of each page in these identical booklets put the child in the role of consumer: consumer of food, entertainment, gifts, and recreation. No page was included that put the child in the role of producer, investigator, initiator, outreacher, explorer, experimenter, puzzler, wonderer, or problem solver.

In these booklets, like many others encountered around the country, no page had a title such as "What I want to know more about," or "What I am curious about," or "What I want to explore, find out, solve, figure out," or even "What I want to make." Instead of encouraging children to reach out and understand or investigate phenomena worthy of their attention, the headings of the pages turned their attention toward themselves.

A similar manifestation of practices intended to foster self-esteem but that may contribute to self-preoccupation was observed in a suburban school kindergarten. Here, displayed on a bulletin board were comments made by the morning and afternoon children about their visit to a dairy farm. Each of the forty-seven children's sentences listed on the bulletin board began with the words "I liked": "I liked the cows," "I liked the milking machine," "I liked the chicks." But there was no sentence such as "What surprised me was...," "What I am curious about is...," or "What I want know more about is...."

The children's sentences could be analyzed on many levels. But for the purposes of this discussion, they point out two characteristics of the particular teaching practice in the suburban kindergarten, namely, the tendency to encourage children's exclusive focus on gratification and the missed opportunity to encourage children's disposition to examine worthwhile phenomena around them. Surely there were features of the visit to the dairy farm that aroused some children's curiosity about the real world and that could spark some further investigations. But such responses were not in evidence and were therefore unlikely to have been appreciated and strengthened.

Another common example of practices intended to enhance self-esteem but unlikely to do so was a display of kindergartners' work consisting of nine identical, large, paper doll-like figures, each with a balloon containing a sentence stem beginning "I am

special because." The sentences depicted in the display read "I am special because I can color," "...I can ride a bike," "...I like to play with my friends," "...I know how to play," and so forth. Although there is certainly value in these skills, traits, or activities, is there not some danger in *stressing* that children's specialness is dependent on these comparatively trivial things, rather than on more enduring skills and traits such as the ability to persist in the face of difficulty and the desire to help their classmates? The examples described above are not unusual; very similar work can be seen in many schools all over the country.

Why should children's attention be turned so insistently inward toward themselves? Can such superficial flattery boost self-esteem? Can young children's minds be intellectually engaged by such exercises? Can their dispositions to explore and investigate worthwhile topics be strengthened by such activities? Is it possible that the cumulative effect of such practices, when used frequently, is to undermine children's perceptions of their teachers as thoughtful and knowledgeable adults who are worthy of respect?

Teachers who use the "All About Me" booklets described above have expressed their belief that the intentions behind the common "All About Me" exercise is to make children "feel good about themselves" and to motivate them by beginning "where they are." However, the same intentions could be satisfied in other ways. Starting "where children are" can be accomplished by providing topics that would encourage curiosity about others *and* themselves, reduce emphasis on consumer activities, and at the same time strengthen the intellectual ethos of the classroom.

Indeed, starting "where the children are" can just as easily be satisfied by pooling the class data in a project entitled "All About *Us*." The individual data could be collected, summarized, graphed, compared, and analyzed in a variety of ways so as to minimize focusing the children's attention exclusively on themselves.

Such a project was observed in a rural British infant school several years ago. A large display on the bulletin board was titled "We Are a Class Full of Bodies." Just below the title was the heading "Here Are the Details." All the display space was taken up with bar graphs of the children's birth and current weights and heights, eye colors, numbers of lost teeth, shoe sizes, and so forth, in which the data for the whole class were pooled. As the children

worked in small groups collecting information brought from home, taking measurements, preparing graphs together, and helping each other to mount displays of analyses of many individual characteristics, the teacher was able to create an ethos of a community of researchers looking for averages, trends, and ranges. This project began "where the children were" by collecting, pooling, analyzing, and displaying data derived from each child in the class. Projects such as this can foster children's self-esteem without encouraging excessive or exclusive preoccupation with self and self-gratification, and can maintain children's respect for their teachers.

Materials for Teachers

Many books and kits for teachers recommend exercises to help children "feel good about themselves." One typical example, a booklet with tear-out worksheets for easy duplication, is called *Building Self-Esteem with Koala-Roo* (Fendel & Ecker, 1989). One such worksheet (p. 82) is bordered by fourteen repetitions in capital letters of the phrase "YOU ARE SPECIAL!" At the top left-hand corner is a drawing of a smiling koala bear waving its left paw, holding in the other paw a heart saying, "I love you!" The heading on the page is "You Are Special." Below the heading is a line for a child's name followed by the phrase "You Are Special!" again. This is followed by "I am very glad that I have been your X grade teacher," though no space is provided for the teacher's name. This line is followed by more text, including "There's no one else quite like you," "You're one of a kind," "You're unique," and so forth.

It is doubtful whether the complete text of the page described above meets the readability index for kindergartners or first graders or other children young enough to be taken in by such excessive coddling. It would be surprising and disappointing if children old enough to read those pages could be inspired by its content. Page 81 of the same book (Fendel & Ecker, 1989) lists other materials available, such as "Can-Do Kid of the Week" certificates, "Can-Do Deliveroo" with a welcome-to-school note on it, and a "Can-Do Kid of the Week" bulletin board design.

Another example of the genre, found in an advertisement in a popular teachers' magazine, is a kit for teachers titled "Excellence in Early Childhood!" The advertisement promotes a unit of

activities entitled "I am Special" for three-, four- and five-year-olds. The advertisement lists a kit that includes a Student Activity Book filled with colorful hands-on projects and illustrated stories, and a Teacher Guide for twenty-nine lesson plans, stories, finger plays, and so forth, designed to promote "feeling good about oneself." In answer to the question "What Will Children Learn from the 'I am Special' kit?" the advertisement claims that they "become aware that they are created in a very special and unique way" and "see themselves as good and worthwhile individuals." These illustrations are simply two examples among many (see also Borba & Borba, 1978; Hamilton & Flemming, 1990). Many similar teaching aids in early childhood classrooms all over the United States have been observed.

The concept of specialness expressed in these activities seems, by definition, self-contradictory: if everyone is special, nobody is special. Furthermore, frequent feedback about how special one is might even raise some doubt along the lines of "Metninks thou dost protest too much!" While each individual may indeed be unique, we surely want to cultivate in children the view that, while we are unique in some respects, we also have a great deal in common.

Another common practice which some educators believe helps support children's self-esteem is "Show and Tell." It is not clear, however, whether this common feature of early childhood programs (sometimes referred to as "bring and brag") does as much to enhance self-esteem as it does to encourage children to be unduly concerned about the impressions they make on others, and to engage in one-upmanship. Many early childhood specialists justify the practice on the grounds that it provides children with an opportunity to practice an early form of public speaking and thereby to strengthen their verbal expressive skills. Some teachers also hope that children will sharpen their listening skills as they attend to the showing and telling by their peers. However, it is not clear what happens to children who feel that what they have to show and tell cannot compete with their peers' contributions. Furthermore, observations of many such group sessions suggest that more than a few of the children seem to be learning to tune out their peers rather than listen to them. There are other more meaningful and intellectually defensible ways that children can speak to groups of their peers. For example, children can report the

discoveries, ideas, and experiences derived from their own efforts and real accomplishments to groups of peers and parents (see Katz & Chard, 1989).

The trend toward excessive emphasis on self-esteem and self-congratulation described above may be due to a general desire to correct earlier traditions of eschewing complimenting children for fear of making them conceited. However, the current practices described above seem to be overcorrections of such traditions. The argument presented in this essay, that the practices intended to strengthen children's self-esteem may inadvertently foster narcissism, is explored below with a brief discussion of the meanings of these two terms.

Distinctions between Self-Esteem and Narcissism

Some of the distinctions between self-esteem and narcissism become evident in the study of children's development of self-esteem, and in the examination of variations among different cultures' conceptions of self-identity, including the general differences between the viewpoints of Eastern and Western cultures. These topics are discussed in this section, as are other aspects of self-esteem which shed light on the distinction between self-esteem and narcissism. These aspects include the interrelationship between self-esteem and those moods or feelings that accompany high self-esteem; and the effect of contexts on self-esteem. Following an examination of the distinctions between self-esteem and narcissism, some definitions of narcissism are provided.

Self-Esteem

Definitions

Even though a vast quantity of theory, research, and commentary on the construct of self-concept has been produced since William James first introduced the notion more than one hundred years ago, the construct and its manifestations remain elusive. As Harter (1983) points out, constructs that are related to the construct of self-concept are also usually described by hyphenated terms such as self-worth, self-esteem, self-assurance, and self-regard.

Bednar, Wells, and Peterson (1989) define self-esteem "as a subjective and realistic self-approval" (p. 4). They point out that "self-esteem reflects how the individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiencing" (p. 4) and that different aspects of the self create a "profile of emotions associated with the various roles in which the person operates...and [that self-esteem] is an enduring and affective sense of personal value based on accurate self-perceptions." According to this definition, low self-esteem would be characterized by negative emotions associated with the various roles in which a person operates and by either low personal value or inaccurate self-perceptions.

Furthermore, Bednar et al. describe paradoxical examples of individuals of substantial achievement who report deep feelings of low self-esteem. The authors suggest that a theory of self-esteem must take into account the important role of an individual's "self-talk and self-thoughts" as well as the perceived appraisal of others (p. 11). They conclude that "high or low levels of self-esteem...are the result and the reflection of the internal, affective feedback the organism most commonly experiences" (p. 14). They point out that all individuals must experience some negative feedback from their social environment, some of which is bound to be valid. Thus a significant aspect of the development and maintenance of self-esteem must address how individuals cope with negative feedback.

Bednar et al. suggest that, if individuals avoid rather than cope with negative feedback, they have to devote substantial effort to "gain the approval of others by *impression management*, that is, pretending to be what we believe is most acceptable to others" (p. 13; italics theirs). If individuals respond to negative feedback by striving to manage the impressions they make on others to gain their approval, they also have to "render most of the favorable feedback they receive [as] untrustworthy, unbelievable, and psychologically impotent because of their internal awareness of their own facade" (p. 13). This preoccupation with managing the impression one makes on others is a behavior characteristic usually included in definitions of narcissism.

For very young children, self-esteem is probably best thought to consist of deep feelings of being loved, accepted, and valued by significant others rather than of feelings derived from evaluating oneself against some external criteria, as in the case of older children. Indeed, the only criterion appropriate for accepting and loving a newborn or infant is that he or she has been born. The unconditional love and acceptance experienced in the first year or two of life lay the foundation for later self-esteem, and probably make it possible for the preschooler and older child to withstand occasional criticism and negative evaluations that usually accompany socialization into the larger community.

As children grow beyond the preschool years, the larger society imposes criteria and conditions upon love and acceptance. If the very early feelings of love and acceptance are deep enough, the child can most likely weather the rebuffs and scoldings of the later years without undue debilitation. With increasing age, however, children begin to internalize criteria of self-worth and a sense of the standards to be attained on the criteria from the larger community they observe and in which they are beginning to participate. The issue of criteria of self-esteem is examined more closely below.

Cassidy's (1988) study of the relationship between self-esteem at age five and six years and the quality of early mother-child attachment supports Bowlby's theory that construction of the self is derived from early daily experience with attachment figures. The results of the study support Bowlby's conception of the process through which continuity in development occurs, and of the way early child-mother attachment continues to influence the child's conception and estimation of the self across many years. The working models of the self derived from early mother-child interaction organize and help mold the child's environment "by seeking particular kinds of people and by eliciting particular behavior from them" (Cassidy, 1988, p. 133). Cassidy points out that very young children have few means of learning about themselves other than through experience with attachment figures. She suggests that if infants are valued and given comfort when required, they come to

feel valuable; conversely, if they are neglected or rejected, they come to feel worthless and of little value.

In an examination of developmental considerations, Bednar, Wells, and Peterson (1989) suggest that feelings of competence and the self-esteem associated with them are enhanced in children when their parents provide an optimum mixture of acceptance, affection, rational limits and controls, and high expectations. In a similar way, teachers are likely to engender positive feelings when they provide such a combination of acceptance, limits, and meaningful and realistic expectations concerning behavior and effort (Lamborn et al., 1991). Similarly, teachers can provide contexts for such an optimum mixture of acceptance, limits, and meaningful effort in the course of project work as described by Katz and Chard (1989).

Many teachers feel compelled to employ the questionable practices described above as strategies to help children who seem to them not to have had the kind of strong and healthy attachment experiences in their early years that support the development of self-esteem. While such children may not be harmed by exercises that tell them they are special or by constant praise and flattery, the argument here is that they are more likely to achieve real self-esteem from experiences that provide meaningful challenge and opportunities for real effort.

The Cyclic Nature of Self-Esteem

The relationships between self-evaluation, effort, and reevaluation of the self suggest a cyclic aspect to the dynamics of self-esteem. Harter (1983) asserts that the term *self-worth* is frequently used to refer to aspects of motivation and moods. High self-esteem is associated with a mood of cheerfulness, feelings of optimism, and relatively high energy. Low self-esteem is accompanied by feelings of doubt about one's worth and acceptability, and with feeling forlorn, morose, or even sad. Such feelings may be accompanied by relatively low energy and weak motivation, invariably resulting in low effort. In contrast, high self-esteem is associated with high energy, which increases effectiveness and competence, which in turn strengthen feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. In this way, feelings about oneself constitute a *recursive cycle* such that the

feelings arising from self-appraisal tend to produce behavior that strengthens those feelings—both positive and negative.

The cyclic formulation of self-esteem is similar to Bandura's (1989) conception of *self-efficacy*, namely, processes by which perceptions of one's own capacities and effective action "affect each other bidirectionally" (p. 1176). In other words, effective action makes it possible to see oneself as competent, which in turn leads to effective action, and so forth. The same cycle applies to self-perceptions of incompetence. However, Bandura (1989) warns that

> a sense of personal efficacy [does] not arise simply from the incantation of capability. Saying something should not be confused with believing it to be so. Simply saying that one is capable is not necessarily self-convincing, especially when it contradicts preexisting firm beliefs. No amount of reiteration that I can fly will persuade me that I have the efficacy to get myself airborne and to propel myself through the air. (p. 1179)

This formulation of the dynamics of feelings about the self confirms the view that self-esteem merits the concern of educators and parents. Nevertheless, it also casts some doubt on the frequent assertion that, if children are somehow made to "feel good about themselves," success in school will follow. In other words, just because young children need to "feel good about themselves," telling them that they are special (e.g., because they can color) or that they are unique, and providing them with other similar flattery may not cause them to believe they are so or engender in them good feelings about themselves.

Dunn's (1988) view of the nature of self-esteem is that it is related to the extent to which one sees oneself as the cause of effects. She asserts that "the sense of cause [is] a crucial feature of the sense of self" and the essence of self-confidence is the feeling of having an effect on things and being able to cause or at least affect events and others. On the other hand, feeling loved by the significant others in one's environment involves feeling and knowing that one's behavior and status really matter to them—matter enough to cause them to have real emotion and to

provoke action and reaction from them, including anger and stress as well as pride and joy.

Criteria of Self-Esteem

It is reasonable to assume that self-esteem does not exist in a vacuum, but is the product of evaluating oneself against one or more criteria and reaching expected standards on these criteria. These evaluations are unlikely to be made consciously or deliberately, but by means of preconscious or intuitive thought processes. It is likely that these criteria vary not only between cultures and subcultures, but also within them. The criteria may also vary by gender. Furthermore, the standards within a family, subculture, or culture that have to be met on these criteria may also vary by gender. For example, higher standards on a criterion of assertiveness may be required for self-esteem in males than in females. In addition, the criteria against which the worth and acceptability of an individual are estimated may carry different weights across cultures, subcultures, and families, and for the sexes. Criteria may have different weighting for different families, some giving more weight in their total self-esteem to physical appearance, and others to personal traits or teacher acceptance, for example.

Criteria for self-esteem frequently employed in American self-concept research include physical appearance, physical ability, achievement, peer acceptance, and a variety of personal traits (Harter, 1983). As is indicated in the discussion below, Western and Eastern cultures vary in how the self is defined and the criteria against which the self is estimated. These sources of variation imply that some children are likely to have acquired criteria of self-esteem at home and in their immediate community that differ from those assumed valuable in the classroom and in the school.

One of the many challenges teachers face in working with young children of diverse backgrounds is to help them understand and come to terms with the criteria of self-esteem applicable in the class and school without belittling the criteria advocated and applied at home. While it is not appropriate for schools to challenge the criteria or standards of self-esteem of children's families, careful consideration of those self-esteem criteria advocated within the school is warranted.

To the extent that one's self-esteem is based on competitive achievement, it can be enhanced by identifying other individuals or groups who can be perceived as lower or inferior to oneself in achievement. If, for example, schools convey to children that their self-esteem is related to their academic achievement as indicated by the results of competitive grading practices, then a significant proportion of children, *ipso facto*, must have low self-esteem—at least on that criterion. In such a school culture the development of cooperation and intergroup solidarity becomes very problematic. Also, if competitive academic achievement is highly weighted among not only the school's criteria of self-esteem but also the criteria of the culture as a whole, a substantial proportion of school children may be condemned to feel inadequate. An adaptive response of children at the low end of the distribution of academic achievement might be to distance themselves from that culture and to identify and strive to meet other criteria of self-esteem, such as the criteria of various peer groups, that may or may not enhance participation in the larger society. To avoid these potentially divisive effects of such competitive and comparative self-evaluations, the school should provide contexts in which all participants can contribute to group efforts, albeit in individual ways. A substantial body of research indicates that cooperative learning strategies and cooperative goals are effective ways to address these issues (see Ames, 1992).

The matter of what constitute appropriate criteria of self-esteem cannot be settled empirically by research or even theory. These criteria are deeply imbedded within a culture, promoted and safeguarded by the culture's religious, moral, and philosophical institutions.

Although, as stated earlier, it is important to value an infant simply for the fact that he or she has been born, if criteria for self-esteem that are applied later in the child's life include characteristics that are present at birth—such as one's nationality, race, or gender—then the ability of all citizens to achieve self-esteem in a society of diverse groups, especially when one group is culturally or otherwise dominant, is problematic. Furthermore, as suggested above, if children are taught to base their self-appraisals on favorable comparisons of themselves with others, then the identification of inferior others, whether individuals or groups, may

become endemic in a society. When the two tendencies—to base self-esteem on characteristics that are present at birth and to elevate one's self-appraisal by identifying others who are inferior on any given criterion—occur together in a society, conditions develop which are likely to support prejudice and oppression.

If, on the other hand, the criteria address personal attributes that are susceptible to individual effort and intention, such as contributing to one's community, then all citizens have the potential to achieve feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and dignity. Thus, while a person's nationality might not be an appropriate basis of self-esteem, accepting responsibility for the conduct of one's nation in the world and contributing to the welfare of one's nation might be appropriate bases for positive self-appraisal. In any case, the designation of appropriate criteria is not primarily the responsibility of educators, but of the moral institutions of the community and culture at large that educators are duty-bound to support.

This view that nationality in and of itself may be a faulty basis for self-esteem is not to deny the value and desirability of love of country or patriotism, both of which contribute to involvement in the country's welfare. Nor should this view be interpreted as belittling civic and national pride, which can motivate and mobilize efforts to work on behalf of one's community and country.

A related issue is the role of reflected glory in self-esteem, which has both apparently inappropriate and potentially beneficial effects. Should individuals' self-esteem be influenced by the performance of their hometown football team or their country's Olympic teams? According to research on "basking in reflected glory" (BIRGing) reported by Cialdini (1974, 1976), Lee (1985), and Kowalski (1991), the tendency to strengthen one's association with those who are visibly successful and to distance oneself from those who have experienced obvious failures as means of self-enhancement is a common phenomenon. Inasmuch as a sports fan makes no real contribution to the team's performance, that performance would seem to be an inappropriate source of either pride or shame and of fluctuations in the fan's self-esteem. On the other hand, the capacity to experience reflected glory and reflected shame might provide powerful motivation for community action. Action on behalf of one's community would seem to be a legitimate basis for self-esteem.

While the issues are complex, the main argument here is that if personal attributes that are present by virtue of birth alone, without individual effort and contribution, are a source of self-esteem beyond the first few years of life, individuals born without these attributes must see themselves as lacking or low in self-worth; therefore, such attributes seem to be inappropriate criteria for self-esteem.

Situational Determinants of Self-Esteem

Bednar, Wells, and Peterson (1989) state that there may be a "situated" as well as a "general" self-identity (p. 39), suggesting that self-esteem may vary from one interpersonal situation to another. In other words, although the overall context of experience may remain constant, changes in interpersonal situations can cause reassessments of the self. For example, a teacher might have a fairly high estimation of herself in the context of teaching her own class, but when the interpersonal situation changes by the entrance of a colleague or the principal or a parent, she may shift her estimation or self-rating—probably downward! Although the teacher is exactly the same person five minutes before the intrusion as she is five minutes afterwards, the change in self-esteem is created by the teacher herself when she attributes greater significance to the other's assessment of herself than to her own assessment. On the other hand, if the other person's assessment is based on greater knowledge, experience, and expertise, the teacher could consider herself *informed* or *instructed* by that assessment rather than simply accorded lower esteem.

Shifts in self-estimation based on the assessments of significant others may be developmentally appropriate for young children. In an adult, however, revision of self-estimation based on the perceived or imagined assessments of another adult that are at variance with one's own requires placing oneself in the role of child with respect to the other adult. The essence of self-esteem for mature adults is to take seriously the assessments of others, but not to take them more seriously than they take their own self-assessments.

While adults can seek contexts and interpersonal situations that maximize their self-esteem and can strive to avoid those that minimize it, children are at the mercy of the situations in which

adults place them. Inasmuch as young children vary in background, abilities, culture, and so forth, a wide rather than narrow range of interpersonal situations should be provided for them. In other words, an early childhood program is most likely to enhance children's self-esteem and their capacities to deal with inevitable fluctuations in self-esteem when a variety of types of interpersonal situations is available to them.

Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984) addressed this issue in terms of the variety of dimensions of children's behavior to which teachers assign importance in a classroom. They define classes in which a limited range of child behavior is accepted, acknowledged, and rewarded as *unidimensional*. *Multidimensional* classes are those in which teachers provide a wide range of ways for children to contribute to and participate in the classroom life and in which a range of behavior is accepted, rewarded, and acknowledged. Rosenholtz and Simpson suggest that the unidimensional classroom limits opportunity for self-enhancement, and the multidimensional classroom makes it possible for many if not all pupils to find ways to enhance their feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Multidimensionality in the classroom can be fostered when teachers include as part of the curriculum the kinds of projects described by Katz and Chard (1989) in which a wide range of activities of intellectual, social, aesthetic, and artistic value is included.

Cultural Variations

Markus and Kitayama (1991) point out that the construal of the self varies among cultures and that Americans and other Westerners typically construe the self as an *independent*, bounded, unitary, stable entity that is internal and private. On the other hand, they assert that in non-Western cultures such as those in Asia and Africa the self is construed as *interdependent*, connected with the social context, flexible, variable, external, and public. Westerners view the self as an autonomous entity consisting of a unique configuration of traits, motives, values, and behaviors. The Asian view is that the self exists primarily in relation to others, and to specific social contexts, and is esteemed to the extent that it can adjust to others, maintain harmony, and exercise the kind of restraint that will minimize social disruption.

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), these contrasting culture-bound construals of the self have significant consequences for cognition, affect, and motivation. Asian children must learn that positive feelings about the self should derive from fulfilling tasks associated with the well-being of relevant others. On the other hand, Western children have to learn that the self consists of stable dispositions or traits and that "they must try to enhance themselves whenever possible...taking credit for success...explaining away their failures, and in various ways try to aggrandize themselves" (p. 242). Eventually American children must learn that "maintaining self-esteem requires separating oneself from others and seeing oneself as different from and better than others" (p. 242). According to this formulation, Americans cannot perceive themselves as better than others without describing the others as worse than themselves. When one's own self-esteem is the result of comparison processes, its maintenance may contribute to constant wariness of the risk of coming out poorly in such comparative assessments of self-worth. At worst, such sources of self-esteem may contribute to a need to identify lesser or inferior others—either individuals or groups. At best, they may contribute to excessive competitiveness and may distract individuals from giving their full attention to the tasks at hand, thereby depressing their learning and effectiveness. Developmental studies reviewed by Markus and Kitayama (1991) indicate that self-enhancement and self-promotion are perceived negatively in Japan and that, although not apparent in the early years, by fifth grade Japanese children have learned that

> it is unwise to gloat over their accomplishments or to express confidence in their own ability. Research indicates that as children are socialized in an interdependent cultural context, they begin to appreciate the cultural value of self-restraint and, furthermore, to believe in a positive association between self-restraint and other favorable attributes of the person not only in the social, emotional domains but also in the domains of ability and competence. (p. 242)

The distinctions between the Western *independent* and the non-Western *interdependent* construal of the self indicate that the sources of self-esteem are also distinctive. For Westerners, independent self-esteem is achieved by actualizing one's own attributes, having one's accomplishments validated by others, and being able to compare oneself to others favorably. In Asian and other non-Western cultures, self-esteem is related to self-restraint, modesty, and connectedness with others. Stevenson and his colleagues (Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Lummis, Stigler, Fan, & Ge, 1990; Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stigler, Hsu, & Kitamura, 1990) have noted that American children appear to have more positive conceptions of their mathematical abilities than Asian children do, even though the latter actually perform much better than the former. Such findings must be interpreted in light of the cultural differences of the two groups. Asian children apparently learn early that pride in one's strengths is interpreted as gloating and is unacceptable; American children are encouraged to be proud of their accomplishments. Frequent exhortations to "feel good about oneself" and to see oneself as "special" may contribute to the unrealistic self-appraisals reported by Stevenson and his colleagues.

Along similar lines, Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto (1991) distinguish between private and collective aspects of the self, arguing that the private self is emphasized more in individualistic cultures such as in North America and parts of Europe and that the collective aspects of the self are emphasized more in collectivistic cultures such as those of East Asia. These contrasts suggest that, while self-esteem seems to be important in all cultures, it is achieved in diverse ways in different cultures.

The practices described earlier in this discussion that are intended to help children achieve and maintain high self-esteem (e.g., "All About Me" books and "I am Special" celebrations) may inadvertently cultivate narcissism—not in its pathological form as the term is used in psychiatric diagnoses, but as a general disposition. These school practices may be symptomatic of our larger culture, described by several observers as having many of the attributes of a narcissistic society (Lasch, 1979; Wallach & Wallach, 1985). Lowen (1985) claims that when success is more important than self-respect, the culture itself overvalues image and

is narcissistic, and further that narcissism denotes a degree of unreality in individuals and the culture.

Our culture seems almost obsessed with the image one projects to others. Many of our political leaders use expressions like not wanting their actions "to *appear* to be improper" rather than not wanting them to *be* improper. At the beginning of the Gulf War crisis, President Bush said, "We have to appear to be strong" rather than that we have to be strong, suggesting that momentous decisions are based as much or more upon appearances than upon actualities. The term *impression management* has indeed entered into the national vocabulary!

A related manifestation of confusing images with reality is explored thoughtfully by Kakutani under the heading "Virtual Confusion: Time for a Reality Check." Kakutani (1992) points out that "ardent soap opera viewers routinely confuse their favorite characters with the actors who play them...and send 'CARE' packages to actors who play impoverished characters" (p. B2).

Narcissism

Definitions

According to Lowen (1985), narcissism refers to a syndrome characterized by exaggerated investment in one's own image versus one's true self and in how one *appears* versus how one actually feels. Dispositions often mentioned in definitions of narcissism as being characteristic of narcissism include dispositions to behave in seductive and manipulative ways, to strive for power, and to sacrifice personal integrity for ego needs. Adults diagnosed as suffering from the narcissism syndrome often complain that their lives are empty or meaningless, and they often show insensitivity to the needs of others. Their behavior patterns suggest that notoriety and attention are more important to them than their own dignity.

According to Emmons (1987), narcissism is characterized by being self-absorbed, self-centered, or selfish, even to the extent that it "may lessen individuals' willingness to pursue common social objectives...[and] increase potential for social conflict...on a group level" such as occurs with "excessive ethnocentrism" (p. 11). As part of the definition of narcissism in adults, Emmons refers to the

tendency to "accept responsibility for successful outcomes and deny blame for failed outcomes" (p. 11). According to some specialists, narcissism includes a preoccupation with fantasies about unlimited success, power, and beauty, plus a grandiose sense of self-importance. Raskin, Novacek, and Hogan (1991) interpret their experimental findings to mean that

> narcissistic behaviors are defenses against, or defensive expression of, threatening emotions such as anger, anxiety, and fear. Anger, hostility, and rage seem central to the emotional life of the narcissist; consequently, narcissistic behaviors may allow the expression of these emotions in a way that protects a sense of positive self-regard. (p. 917)

Narcissists are also sometimes described as exhibitionistic, requiring constant attention and admiration, often believing that they are entitled to special favors without the need to reciprocate. They tend to exploit others, to be seekers of sensations, experiences, and thrills, and to be highly susceptible to boredom. Many of these characteristics of narcissism seem to apply to our culture in general and to many of our youth in particular.

Wink (1991) suggests that narcissism takes at least two major forms. The classical form is indicated by excessive need for admiration, frequent exhibitionism, conceit, and a tendency toward open expression of grandiosity—commonly referred to as "being a bit too full of oneself." Wink calls the second form "covert narcissism," in which individuals "appear to be hypersensitive, anxious, timid, and insecure; but on close contact surprise others with their grandiose fantasies" (p. 591). They tend to be exploitative and to over-interpret others' behavior as caused by or directed to themselves rather than to others.

In sum, healthy self-esteem refers to realistic and accurate positive appraisals of the self on significant criteria across a variety of interpersonal situations. It also includes the ability to cope with the inevitability of some negative feedback. By contrast, unhealthy self-esteem, as in narcissism, refers to insensitivity to others, with excessive preoccupation with the self and one's own image and appearance in the eyes of others.

Appropriate Practices

While the definitions of narcissism discussed above refer to adult personality disturbances, the concept of narcissism is discussed here as a caution against many practices that may inadvertently lead to mild forms of the syndrome. Practices that emphasize self-celebration, appearance, and image and that are characterized by emphasizing trivial criteria for self-appraisal are unlikely to lead to healthy self-esteem, in part because they fail to provide children with meaningful challenge, effort, and problem solving. Points to consider in developing appropriate practices are discussed below.

Optimum Self-Esteem

The research of Cassidy (1988) suggests that the foundation of self-esteem, whether high or low, is laid very early in the context of interactions with primary caregivers. It continues to be influenced throughout development in the context of relationships with significant adults and peers within a particular culture. The criteria against which estimations of the self are made are learned early within the family and modified in the course of participation in institutions like schools and the larger society.

In the halls of an elementary school, a large banner was displayed that read, "There's no such thing as too much self-esteem!" Regardless of the fact that the intended recipient of the message was not clear, the message is misleading, if not incorrect. Given the prevalence of messages such as this, it is useful to keep in mind the general principle that, even though something (whether a characteristic, an experience, or an object) is generally good for us or desirable, it is not necessarily true that the more of it we have, the better it is for us. Rather, the value of a generally beneficial characteristic may be best realized when it is present at an optimum rather than a minimum or maximum level. Thus a more appropriate suggestion would seem to be that no one needs maximum self-esteem, if indeed such a thing is possible: it would limit one's ability to read feedback accurately. Rather, it would seem wiser for parents and teachers to help children achieve *optimum* self-esteem. Given that some ups and downs in behavior,

competence, and feedback are bound to occur, self-esteem should fluctuate within a narrow and optimum range.

Esteem for Children

While there is little doubt that many children arrive at preschool and school doors with less than optimum self-esteem, telling them otherwise is unlikely to have much effect. Feelings cannot be learned from direct instruction. Furthermore, constant messages about how wonderful one is may raise doubts about the credibility of the message and messenger.

Self-esteem is most likely to be fostered when children are esteemed. Esteem is conveyed to them when significant adults and peers treat them respectfully, consult their views and preferences (even if they do not accede to them), and provide opportunities for real decisions and choices about events and things that matter to them. Young children's opinions, views, suggestions, and preferences about relevant activities and events should be respectfully solicited and considered seriously.

For example, a kindergarten teacher watching her pupils build a model school bus in her classroom had noted that their efforts were hampered when more than about six children were working on it at the same time. She shared her observations with the children and suggested that they try to work out a schedule so that no more than four or five of them at a time were working on the project. The children accepted her challenge eagerly and developed a schedule that was not very effective. They soon realized this and then sought her advice and fashioned a more workable one, to their great satisfaction. To be sure, on such occasions some children will come up with wild or silly notions, and their peers may quickly tell them so. However, in the course of discussion, teachers can gain insight into how children understand the matters at hand and can make sound decisions about which children need help and what kind of help would be most appropriate. Unless adults treat children as sensible, their dispositions to behave sensibly cannot be strengthened.

Similarly, a first grade teacher reported that, during a daily creative writing time in her class, one boy was unable to generate more than half a sentence. She acknowledged his "writer's block"

appreciatively and suggested to him that he return to the task later in the day when he might have more ideas. At the end of the afternoon, his ideas flowed into two-and-a-half pages about which he expressed real satisfaction. Adults are likely to have difficulty producing creative stories according to a time schedule. It is therefore surprising that children who have yet to attain real fluency are often expected to produce creative writing during fixed time periods!

Self-esteem is unlikely to be fostered by easy success on a series of trivial tasks. Young children are more likely to benefit from real challenge and hard work than from frivolous one-shot activities. In a report on the work of her first grade children's weather project, a teacher complained that it took four children three days to create a working anemometer (a horizontal device for measuring windspeed). Their first few attempts were flawed by their use of so much masking tape to attach the four vanes to the center that a gale force wind was needed to make such a heavy instrument revolve. The children refused to give up their attempt even though their persistence interrupted the teacher's schedule of work. Their eventual success was a source of real satisfaction to them, to say nothing of the learning it provided. The device was much appreciated by their classmates, and ultimately by the teacher as well.

This example illustrates not only the benefits of hard work to children's self-esteem, but also the benefits of mutual cooperation. Educational practices which foster mutual cooperation are likely, therefore, to also foster self-esteem. Such a practice is mixed-age grouping, in which the teaching and other kinds of assistance older children can give younger classmates provide opportunities for children to see clearly their real contributions to others (Katz, Evangelou, & Hartman, 1990). Most of the tasks offered to our young children in early childhood classes provide for individual effort and achievement. However, educational practices such as mixed-age grouping, which encourage mutual support and cooperation, recognize that interpersonal processes that foster healthy self-esteem require that the amount of individual work be balanced with ample opportunity for the kind of group work in which each child has a chance to make an individual contribution to the total group effort through cooperative work.

Early childhood practitioners are rightfully assiduous about encouraging children by offering frequent positive feedback in the form of praise for their efforts. However, the distinction between praise and flattery is often blurred. Gushing over a child's finger painting may be accepted by the child with pleasure, but it is difficult to know when praise becomes so frequent that it begins to lose its value and to be dismissed by children as empty teacher talk. If children are accustomed to frequent praise, its inevitable occasional absence may be experienced by some children as a rebuke, even though the latter is not intended. It is also difficult for adults to maintain a constant flow of meaningful praise. Furthermore, if a child's sense of self-worth can be raised by simple flattery from one person, it probably can be just as easily deflated by the absence of flattery or criticism from another.

A large body of evidence indicates that children benefit from positive feedback. However, praise and rewards are not the only types of positive feedback. Another kind is *appreciation*, by which is meant positive feedback related explicitly and directly to the *content* of the child's interest and effort. A teacher might, for example, bring a new reference book to class in response to a question raised by a child, or share with the children the ideas generated from her reflections on the problems they had raised concerning procedures to try in a project under way. In this way, the teacher treats the children's questions and concerns with respect, deepening interest in the issues raised and providing positive feedback without deflecting the children from the content at issue.

The important point here is that the teacher shows in a positive way that she appreciates their concerns *without taking their minds off the subjects at hand or directing their attention inward*. When children see that their concerns and interests are followed up seriously and respectfully, they are more likely to raise their concerns in the next discussion and take their own ideas seriously. In this way, teachers can strengthen children's dispositions to wonder, reflect, raise questions, and generate alternative solutions to practical and intellectual problems. If rewards and trophies are to be effective, the aspirer has to keep at least one eye on them much of the time, thus becoming less able to be absorbed

completely and wholeheartedly in the topic, problem, or task itself. Certificates, stars, stickers, and trophies also provide children with positive feedback, but their salience is likely to deflect the children's and the teacher's attention from the content of the work at hand.

In their eagerness to reinforce cooperative behavior, teachers often praise young children's efforts by saying such things as "I was really glad when you used your words to get your turn," or "It made me happy to see you share your wagon with Robin." Such strategies may be useful when first introducing children to using verbal strategies for conflict resolution. But like all other strategies, they can be overdone, especially as children reach the preschool years. At issue here is the hypothesis that frequent praise of such behavior may be taken by children to mean that the praised behavior is not expected, as though the unspoken end of those kinds of elliptical sentences is "...because I never expected you to." It may be that children sense our unspoken expectations of them and, indeed, frequently live up to them. Furthermore, such teacher responses may imply that the rationale for the desirable behavior is merely to please the teachers.

It seems more appropriate for teachers to exercise a quiet and calm authority by stating clearly and respectfully what behavior is expected as occasions arise. When children squabble about toys and equipment, the teacher can calmly and firmly suggest phrases to use if they have not yet acquired them, or remind them in a low-key authoritative manner to use appropriate verbal approaches they already know. Because young children are in the early stages of acquiring interactive and conflict resolution skills, teachers may have to use this strategy patiently for several months.

Often well-meaning teachers, in addressing inattentive young children, will encourage them to "put on your listening ears" or "put on your thinking caps" or "zip your lips." One teacher, in urging a resistant child to assist in cleaning up the housekeeping corner, was heard to say, "Put the puppets in their bed. It will help them. They like to be in their bed." More to the point would have been a simple suggestion to put the items where they belong. Perhaps many children see these common teacher behaviors as fun or cute, or perhaps as talking down to them. But it is difficult to imagine that such word games can create an intellectually vital

ethos in the classroom. It is also difficult to imagine that frequent exposure to such childish and phony talk can engender real respect for teachers. Furthermore, such teacher talk is dishonest. How can children who are spoken to in these ways perceive their teachers as models of thoughtful and intellectually alert adults? On the other hand, when parents and teachers address children as young people with lively intellects, and appeal to their good sense, clearly assuming that they have it, children are more likely to be intellectually engaged and to respond sensibly.

When teachers in early childhood classrooms have been asked to list those adjectives which they believed their pupils would use to describe them, the adjective lists frequently relate to their appearance, clothes, voice quality, kindness, firmness, and other nonintellectual characteristics. These lists produced by large numbers of early childhood teachers have rarely included any intellectual qualities such as "she's smart," "knows a lot," "has good ideas." Several teachers have asked their pupils to describe them and have become aware of the lack of reference to the teachers' wisdom and knowledge! When teachers make their own intellectual attributes evident to their pupils, the children are more likely to benefit from the teacher's appreciation and praise of their efforts. The positive feedback they receive is more likely to be valued by children when they can perceive the person who offers it as someone they can look up to and respect.

Children's Own Criteria of Competence

The practice of giving positive feedback to young children in the form of gold stars, smiling faces, and decorative stickers is unlikely to make an enduring contribution to the development of self-esteem, especially if such feedback is very frequent. Rather, children can be helped to develop and apply their own evaluation criteria.

For example, rather than have children take their work home every day, they can be encouraged to collect it in a special folder or portfolio for a week or more. Then at some point the teacher can encourage children to select an item they wish to take home and discuss with them some criteria they might use for selection. The emphasis should not be on whether they like a piece of work, or

whether it is good versus bad. Instead, the children can be encouraged to think about whether a piece of work includes all they want it to, or whether they think it is clear or accurate enough, or whether it shows progress compared with the last item they took home, and so forth. At first, parents might be disappointed when the flow of paintings, collages, and worksheets is interrupted. But teachers can help parents to engage in fruitful discussion with their children about the criteria of selection used, thus encouraging the children to take their own evaluations of their work seriously.

Similarly, when children are engaged in project work with others, they can evaluate the extent to which they have answered the questions they began with and assess the work accomplished on criteria developed with their teacher concerning the accuracy, completeness, and interest value of their final products (see Katz & Chard, 1989). The children can also be encouraged to discuss what they might do the next time they undertake an investigation, thus strengthening the disposition to vary their strategies and use their own experience as a source of data from which to improve their next undertakings. Applying such criteria to their own efforts also helps children to engage their minds in their work, and in their growing understandings and competence, rather than to draw attention to themselves or to the image they project to others.

Coping with Reverses

When children are engaged in challenging and significant activities and interactions, they are bound to experience some failures, reverses, and rebuffs. Parents and teachers have an important role to play not in avoiding such events, but in helping children cope constructively when they fail to get what they want, whether a turn with a toy or success at a task. In such incidents the teacher can say something like "I know you're disappointed, but there's tomorrow, and you can try again." As long as the teacher accepts the child's feelings and responds respectfully, the child is not likely to be harmed by the incident and is more likely to learn from it. Children are more likely to be able to cope with rebuffs, disappointments, and failures when adults acknowledge and accept their feelings of discouragement and at the same time indicate that they can try again another time.

Another approach is to teach children to use what they have learned from their own previous experience as a source of encouragement. A teacher might, for example, help a child recall an earlier experience when he or she struggled with a task or situation and eventually mastered it.

Worthwhile Activities

Healthy self-esteem is more likely to be developed when children are engaged in activities for which they can make real decisions and contributions than in activities that are frivolous and cute. The danger also exists that some activities which might be worthwhile can also become frivolous if carried to an extreme. For example, in many early childhood classrooms, time and effort is given to activities related to holidays. While festive occasions alleviate the routine of daily life and can be opportunities to teach children about other cultures and about their own history, if such festivals are celebrated excessively the learning opportunity becomes lost in triviality and frivolity.

Early childhood educators have traditionally emphasized the fact that play is children's natural way of learning (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 1988). Indeed, a large body of research and years of practical experience attest to the powerful role of play in all facets of important learning in the early years.

Besides play, however, it is just as natural for young children to learn through investigation. Young children are born natural scientists and social scientists. Like anthropologists, they devote enormous amounts of time and energy to investigating and making sense of the environments into which they are born and in which they are raised. Teachers can capitalize on these in-born dispositions during the preschool and early school years by engaging children in investigations through project work, investigations that are in-depth studies of real topics, environments, events, and objects worthy of children's attention and understanding (see Katz & Chard, 1989; Shores, 1992; Chaille & Britain, 1991).

In the course of such investigations, children negotiate with their teachers to determine the questions to be answered, the studies to be undertaken, and ways of representing their findings in media such as paintings, drawings, and dramatic play. Project work

provides children with ample opportunity for real discussion, decision making, choices, cooperation, initiative, joint effort, negotiation, compromise, and evaluation of the outcomes of their own efforts. In this way, children's self-esteem can be based on their contribution to the work of the group, and to the quality of the group's effort and its results.

Uses and Misuses of Enchantment

Just as one of the features of the poster described at the beginning of this essay raised issues about the distinction between practices that foster self-esteem and those that encourage self-preoccupation, another feature of the poster suggested some points relevant to the uses and misuses of enchantment. Note that the medium through which the poster's self-centered message was promoted is a cute, smiling, talking animal! Though this common practice is not directly related to those designed to promote self-esteem, it is related to a general tendency to sweeten and amuse children into "feeling good" and having fun rather than being involved, absorbed, and challenged. In particular, to the extent that every learning environment communicates to children what is important and valuable in the eyes of those who provide it, the decor of early childhood and elementary classrooms emphasizes what is cute, frivolous, and trivial and also misrepresents children's interests. This emphasis is not only questionable on aesthetic and pedagogical grounds—it also may distract children from achieving self-esteem derived from appreciating and interacting with the real world and one's real capacities to contribute to it.

In early childhood settings all over the country, one can see pictures of smiling, talking animals conveying messages to children about rules and routines, often in blazing, flashy colors. One example is a large poster depicting a rabbit, mouse, and bear sitting around a table. The caption says, "Be a good listener. Help others work and learn. Be thoughtful." Among others are pictures of a chick with a bow tie saying to an elephant and a giraffe, "Let's read a story"; a bear seated at a desk saying, "Be a good student"; a squirrel separating a combatant rabbit and horse, saying, "Talking helps settle differences"; sad-faced animals captioned, "We all have feelings." Another example is a whole wall of a kindergarten

classroom covered with a depiction of Humpty Dumpty perched on a wall, saying, "Welcome to School." (Could children made a connection between Humpty Dumpty's fall and their future careers at the school?) Signs indicating the subjects of books in an elementary school library all featured animals reading, and at the entrance a picture of a cat titled "Purr-fectly quiet please!" These kinds of displays are more fanciful than imaginative.

These and many similar posters and bulletin board displays seem to exemplify misuse of the natural appeal that enchanting creatures have for children and even for adults. This phrase is used in contrast to the title of Bettelheim's (1975) well-respected book called *The Uses of Enchantment*, in which he presents eloquent arguments that fairy tales and the like provide children with pretexts and contexts for working out the inevitable conflicts and dark feelings experienced by all children. However compelling is the logic of his exposition, he produces no evidence from child development research that supports his assertion that enchanting tales help children. Researchers have produced no definitive evidence that they are harmful either.

The argument here is that our efforts to make children feel comfortable and cosy by surrounding them with pictures of cuddly creatures are unnecessary and phony. Instead, live animals, and photographs of real ones, would be appropriate and could evoke children's deep interest in them. It is more appropriate to support and appreciate children's own capacities for fantasy than to impose adults' fantasies on them. Most of our children have plenty of exposure to cartoons and the like outside of school. It would be interesting to observe children's responses to being surrounded with real art, especially native and folk art in all its variety in pottery, baskets, macrame, and quilts, as well as in many graphic forms.

The practices described above seem to reflect a dichotomous or conflicting approach to children in our culture. On the one hand, we feel compelled to surround them with silly creatures and to justify many activities on the grounds that they are fun and amusing rather than interesting and absorbing. On the other hand, we introduce children to "stranger danger," instruct them in ways to resist physical and sexual abuse, and provide them with information about nutrition, drugs, and—in some kindergartens—AIDS, before they can understand and cope with such serious

matters. Young children need the protection of adults against such hazards.

The issue underlying the practices described here—namely, those that confuse self-esteem with narcissism and those that misuse enchantment—is *authenticity* versus phoniness. Engaging children in investigations and close observation of their real worlds in ways that respect their lively intellects, and that provide opportunity for effort and real problem solving is more likely to foster healthy self-esteem than are amusement, flattery, and praise for cheap success at frivolous tasks.

Conclusion

The main argument put forward here is that, while the development of self-esteem is an important concern for parents and teachers of young children, many of the practices currently intended to enhance it are more likely to foster preoccupation with oneself and with the way one appears to others. I have suggested that practices which engage children's minds in investigating those aspects of their own experiences and environments which are worth knowing more about can help children develop realistic criteria of self-esteem.

Self-esteem cannot be achieved through direct instruction or exhortations to "feel good" about oneself. Teachers are more likely to foster healthy self-esteem when they help children cope with occasional negative feedback, frustration, and reverses. While it is clear that children need positive feedback about their behavior and their efforts, feedback is most likely to strengthen their self-esteem when it is provided at an optimum rather than maximum level, and when it is specific and informative rather than in the form of general praise. Children are more likely to enhance their sense of self-confidence and self-worth when the learning environment provides a wide variety of activities and tasks, when they have opportunities to make meaningful decisions and choices (see Kohn, 1993), and when optimum challenge rather than quick and easy success is available. Children should also have opportunities to work in groups in which they are encouraged to make and seek suggestions to and from each other, and in which individuals can contribute in their own ways to the group's efforts. As children grow, they can also be encouraged to evaluate their own efforts on

realistic and meaningful criteria. Teachers are also most likely to foster healthy self-esteem when they maintain and communicate their respect for the self-esteem criteria children experience at home and in their community, while they help them to adopt the criteria of the classroom learning environment and the school. Such practices are more likely than trivial practices which engender self-preoccupation to build in children a deep sense of competence and self-worth that can provide a firm foundation for their future.

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A Selected ERIC Bibliography on Self-Esteem

ERIC Documents

Howerton, D. Lynn; And Others. (1992). *Self-Esteem and Achievement of At-Risk Adolescent Black Males*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (21st, Knoxville, TN, November 11-13, 1992). For a related document, see TM 019 499. ED354254; 8p.

The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of at-risk adolescent black males was studied for 42 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was used to provide global measures of self-esteem. School grades and scores from the Stanford Achievement Test battery were used to measure academic achievement. The SEI was found to be a reliable measure of global self-esteem for these at-risk adolescents. Moderate to strong internal consistency measures were found for three of the four SEI subscales. The overall average self-esteem score for these subjects was significantly lower than for most means reported in normative studies for the SEI, but not significantly lower than means reported in studies of rural ninth graders, high school black males, and blacks in grades 3 through 8. Self-esteem was significantly related to standardized test battery composite score and end-of-year school grade average. SEI was also significantly related to grades in English and social studies, but not mathematics and science. Findings suggest that overall self-esteem might be enhanced by increasing school performance in specific academic content areas. One table presents correlations for self-esteem and academic achievement.

Bean, Reynold. (1992). *Cooperation, Social Responsibility & Other Skills: Using the 4 Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools*. For related guides, see CG 024 748-750. ED353533; 188p.

Intended to discuss the relationship between cooperation and social responsibility and children's self-esteem, this book shows teachers how to teach children skills that aid cooperation and social responsibility. Chapter 1 examines the problems with competitive and individualistic teaching strategies. Cooperation is explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. This chapter looks at the arenas where cooperation is learned and practiced, including the family and friendships, and provides an understanding of cooperation issues that will help teachers to implement cooperative methods in their classrooms. The self-esteem model that this book is based on is described in Chapter 3. This chapter and Chapter 4 examine the connections between cooperation and self-esteem and show how a learning environment dedicated to cooperation and building a sense of social responsibility enhances different aspects of self-esteem. Chapter 4 also includes a discussion of conformity and the use of rewards. Chapter 5 describes various influences on classroom climate and offers many suggestions for teachers seeking to implement cooperative strategies. Chapter 6 describes seven basic strategies for enhancing cooperation and social responsibility. Chapter 7 looks at special problems, including why some children do not respond well to cooperative contexts. Suggestions to school administrators and school boards for using their influence to help build and to support a cooperative climate at the school and district level are presented in chapters 8 and 9. The appendixes provide a checklist and lists of techniques relating to building self-esteem.

Bean, Reynold. (1992). *Positive Risks, Challenges & Other Paths to Success: Using the 4 Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools*. For related guides, see CG 024 748-751. ED353532; 175p.

Intended to examine sources of disempowerment in classrooms and schools and suggests ways to deal with them, this book shows how to build children's feelings of competence, control and influence by understanding and increasing their self-esteem. Chapter 1 looks at the barriers to overcome in empowering children. It examines how numerous forces at work in the schools, many of the traditional, time-honored practices, actually disempower children and make it more difficult for them to succeed. Chapter 2 examines some of the

principles that underlie success in school. The self-esteem model this book is based on is described in Chapter 3. This chapter provides a theoretical grounding in self-esteem principles that will enhance understanding of what follows. Chapter 4 examines the link between empowerment and self-esteem. Chapter 5 describes specific practices and strategies to build children's feelings of control and competence. Chapter 6 presents a number of teacher-tested classroom activities that enhance children's feelings of power. Chapter 7 deals with specific issues of standards and expectations and how these affect children's performance and belief in themselves. Finally, for administrators and school boards, Chapters 8 and 9 describe concrete ways in which administrative practices and school and district policies can empower teachers and children and support them in developing the capacity to take risks and accept challenges. The appendixes offer checklists and lists of techniques relating to building self-esteem.

Bean, Reynold. (1992). *Honesty, Perseverance & Other Virtues: Using the 4 Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools*. For related guides, see CG 024 748-751. ED353531; 213p.

Intended to foster understanding of ethics and morality, this book is about helping children have higher self-esteem by teaching them what makes them good, noble, special and worthy of respect from others as well as self-respect. Chapter 1 discusses how schools can stand for something, how students and teachers experience meaning and purpose in their school lives, and how the school environment can reflect the values and goals espoused by the school and exemplify the virtues children are learning the classroom. Chapter 2 examines the role of virtue in children's lives. It discusses what understanding and being able to label their virtues can mean to children and how virtues can be viewed as a learned skill. Chapters 3 and 4 provide solid grounding in understanding the relationship between teaching about virtue and enhancing self-esteem. Chapter 5 contains worksheets that explain a specific virtue to children, ask them questions about how they have experienced it, and list notable people who represent that virtue. Chapter 6 shows how to think about virtue as a theme for classroom use and how to apply that

theme throughout the regular curriculum at every grade level. Chapter 7, for the administrator, shows how administrative action contributes to creating a climate that supports teaching about virtue and helps a school stand for something. Chapter 8 is for the school board and discusses creating a respectful climate. The appendixes provide a "who's who" that correlates with chapter 5, a 200-item list of biographies for children, and a checklist and lists of techniques related to building self-esteem.

Bean, Reynold. (1992). *Individuality, Self-Expression & Other Keys to Creativity: Using the 4 Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools*. For related guides, see CG 024 749-751. ED353530; 176p.

This book examines the relationship between creativity and self-esteem in detail in order to help build a classroom and school environment and to design activities that will enhance creativity and self-esteem at the same time. Chapter 1 analyzes some of the obstacles to enhancing creativity in schools and proposes methods for overcoming them. Chapter 2 explores various facets of creativity that affect the classroom environment and brings up critical issues to consider when building a classroom dedicated to encouraging creative process children. The self-esteem model this book is based on is described in Chapter 3. This chapter provides a grounding in self-esteem principles that will enhance understanding of the link between creativity and self-esteem. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of one self-esteem condition—the Sense of Uniqueness—and looks at how it can be nurtured in children so that their creative potential can be realized more fully. Chapter 5 offers suggestions on classroom organization, teaching methods, and curriculum to enhance creativity in all children. Chapter 6 is about the special role of the teacher. Chapters 7 and 8 are for administrators and school board members. Throughout the book there are general strategies and specific activities for practice. The appendixes provide personal arena behavior checklists and techniques for building self-esteem in the interpersonal and group arenas.

Williams, Wayne; McCollester, Michele. (1990). *The Relationship between Participation in an Extra-Curricular Drama Club and the Self-Esteem of At-Risk Elementary Students*. ED352149; 17p.

A study of the relationship between involvement in an extracurricular drama club and the self-esteem of at-risk preadolescent and elementary students examined 244 fourth and fifth grade students in a rural Missouri school district. The experimental group consisted of 72 students who selected drama club from a list of extracurricular activities. The control group consisted of the remaining 172 students who were not involved in the drama club but who chose a different extracurricular activity. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to students before and after their participation in the drama club. All fourth and fifth grade teachers completed an At-Risk Identification Scale for their students. The Drop-Out Alert Scale was administered to assess the attitudes of the treatment group before and after participation in the drama club. Results showed that participation in the drama club had a positive influence on students' self-esteem and reduced their at-risk behaviors.

Keane, Kathy Ann. (1992). *Using Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) To Reduce the Number of After-School Detentions and Increase Self-Esteem among Fourth through Sixth Grade Tutors Who Are Considered To Be Discipline Problems*. ED349531; 78p.

The need to decrease the number of students repeatedly receiving after-school detentions was addressed by the implementation of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program. The PAL program is based on the premise that students act out because they desire power. The program gave students power over tutoring situations by having input into planning for themselves and others. The PAL program began with 24 students in grades four through six, although one student withdrew leaving a total of 23 students. Tutoring sessions took place two times per week for a period of 20 minutes. The student tutors met with the researcher and the classroom teacher on alternate Fridays for 20 to 30 minutes. The PAL program was

evaluated by a review of the discipline records which indicated a decrease in the number of after-school detentions received by the target group who were classified as behavior problems. Self-esteem in regard to the students' behavior was increased as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (1984). Pro-social behavior was also monitored via teacher checklists. Critical thinking skills were utilized in developing lesson plans for each week. Various forms are appended.

Ruther, Nicole M.; Richman, Charles L. (1992). *The Relationship between Mothers' Eating Restraint and Their Children's Attitudes and Behaviors*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association (38th, Knoxville, TN, March 25-28, 1992). ED344162; 20p.

In recent years, society has emphasized the desirability of being thin. Although children may learn the attractiveness of being thin from society, another influential component may be their parents' attitudes toward food, eating, and eating restraint. This study investigated the dieting practices and beliefs in fourth-grade children and their mothers. Fifty children and their mothers completed an eating restraint scale; the children also completed measures of self-esteem and locus of control. Based on previous findings, children with higher eating restraint were expected to have lower self-esteem. Although the children's eating restraint, self-esteem, and locus of control were not related, the mothers' eating restraint was found to be positively related to their daughters' eating restraint and internality scores. No relationship was found between the mothers' eating restraint and their sons' eating restraint, locus of control, or self-concept measures. These findings can be interpreted in terms of same-sex identification processes.

Joseph, Joyce A. (1992). *Improving Self-Esteem of At-Risk Students*. ED343106; 215p.

A practicum addressed the problem of low self-esteem of at-risk students through a 12-week dropout prevention program for 19 eighth-grade students in urban, middle class school. The program

used five basic strategies for raising self-esteem: affective skills training (using role playing, mapping, and brainstorming to help students learn to make decisions and solve problems), remediation of basic skills, implementation of an in-house mentor/protege program (in which each student had a "friend" on campus who offered support, encouragement, and understanding), and parent/teacher involvement. The program met affective and cognitive needs of students in a caring, supportive environment. Results indicated that students improved their basic skills in reading and demonstrated increased levels of positive self-concept. (Fifty-four references are attached. Extensive appendixes contain pre/posttest results, parent correspondence, program implementation information, instructional material, and evaluation forms.)

Bean, Reynold. (1992). *The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem: A New Approach for Elementary and Middle Schools. Second Edition.* ED343060; 223p.

This document presents a guide to increasing self-esteem in individual students, in the classroom, and throughout the school environment of elementary and middle school students. The guide was created from a self-esteem model positing that strong self-esteem can be attained only when children experience positive feelings within four conditions of self-esteem: Connectiveness, Uniqueness, Power, and Models. The established model is expanded upon and background information and concrete suggestions for incorporating these conditions into existing elementary or middle school curricula are provided. The nine chapters of the book provide an in-depth explanation of each of the four conditions of self-esteem, suggest specific methods for observing and evaluating children's levels of these conditions, and present essential techniques for improving self-esteem in daily one-on-one and group interactions. Over 50 classroom activities that enhance and maintain student self-esteem within existing content areas are included, as are concrete guidelines for designing one's own activities based on solid self-esteem principles. The book also suggests ways to plan or revise discipline and classroom procedures to respond to self-esteem issues and ways to assess and enhance the self-esteem of teachers, staff, and administrators.

Hadderman, Margaret. (1992). *Cooperative Learning in Elementary Schools*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management; Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals. Research Roundup, 8(2) Winter. ED342088; 5p.

Cooperative learning is being recommended as a solution for numerous education problems, from enhancing disadvantaged children's self-esteem to ensuring academic success for all students. Cooperative learning has great potential as a supplement or alternative to traditional teaching methods when students are adequately socialized and motivated. The teacher's role is crucial, since conventional workbook exercises are usually inadequate and students must be led to assume responsibility for their own learning and deportment. This "Roundup" summarizes cooperative learning research studies by four major contributors. Robert Slavin's comprehensive review article, stressing group goals and individual accountability, links the use of Student Team Learning and Group Investigation models to student gains in achievement, intergroup relations, and self-esteem. David Johnson and Roger Johnson's meta-analysis shows the superiority of cooperative learning strategies in promoting student achievement and identifies factors influencing group success or failure. Elizabeth Cohen's article argues that cooperative learning's survival depends on developing new curriculum materials, addressing student status problems, and creating collegial and administrative support systems for teachers. Daniel Solomon's study of cooperative learning in a longitudinal Child Development Project shows that K-4 students in three program schools exhibited more socially responsive behavior and concern for democratic values that their peers in control schools.

Kallmann, Diane A. (1991). *Development and Implementation of an At-Risk Program To Aid Targeted Middle School Students with Self Esteem and Academic Performance*. ED340967; 107p.

The problem of school dropouts and at-risk students has many causes. No one cause can be seen clearly as the dominant factor in a child leaving school and the possibility of that student not finishing his high school career. This program addressed the

problems of at-risk students with poor social and academic skills. The literature reviewed stressed a multi-level approach to the problem, concentrating on the improvement of academic performance, attitude, and self-confidence. The goals of the program were to: (1) significantly increase self-confidence; (2) sensitize faculty and administration to the problems of the at-risk student; (3) increase the academic performance of the targeted students; and (4) improve the attitudes of the students toward school. A multi-faceted program involving faculty, parents, peers, and counselors was used to address these goals. Private secondary school students (N=35) from grades 7, 8, and 9 were targeted for the program and 28 of these students met the stated goals and objectives of the practicum. Results indicated that individualization and concentrated effort in learning strategies, in conjunction with parent and faculty involvement, aided in raising self-esteem and in keeping the at-risk student in school. Students displayed greater academic motivation due to an increase in self-esteem and expressed positive feelings about themselves, resulting in increased academic success.

Kallmann, Diane A. (1989). *Significant Others of U.S. White, Black, and Chinese Early Adolescents*. ED340962; 11p.

Recently the role of significant others in the formation of adolescents' feelings of self-esteem has received considerable attention. This study compared the significant others of White (N=77), Black (N=52), and Chinese American (N=48) 10- to 12-year-old Catholic school students. Subjects were asked to state the first, second, and third, most important persons in their lives and to rate whether that person usually made them feel from very good to bad. For all groups, a larger percentage of boys than girls placed parents as first to third in significance. For Black females, parents as first choice was the lowest percentage. For the first choices, Black males had the highest parent percentage. Rank order of first choice was consistent across sex and race; mother first, father second with one exception, with Black females placing relatives second. When the first three choices were combined, the first choice order prevailed with one exception. For Chinese females, relatives and then mother was the order. Relatives were much less

important to White adolescents, failing to appear in the top-ranking three. For the Chinese, they were extremely important, especially to the girls. Siblings did not emerge as significant others. No Black male or Chinese female viewed a friend as most significant. Teachers were not very significant at all, but when they were, it was for White females and Black and Chinese males.

Weber, Roserita. (1991). *Factors Associated with Self-Esteem in Sixth through Ninth Graders.* ED339958; 83p.

Those who guide and work with children are interested in enabling them to build concepts about themselves that lead to higher self-esteem. This study investigated factors associated with self-esteem in sixth through ninth graders. The independent variables were locus of control, family structure, sex role, gender, grade level, and parental alcohol usage. Instruments used were the Personal Attribute Inventory, the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale, the BEM Sex-Role Inventory, and a Student Information Sheet. The sample consisted of 163 students from a middle and a junior high school. Six composite null hypotheses were tested using three-way analysis of variance. A total of 28 comparisons were made with an additional 14 recurring comparisons. Of the five comparisons that were significant, three were for main effects and two for interactions. The significant main effects were: family structure for the dependent variable self-esteem; and sex role for both the dependent variables self-esteem and locus of control. The significant interactions were between family structure and locus of control, and between family structure and sex role for the dependent variable self-esteem. The results support an association between: (1) family structure and self-esteem; (2) sex role and self-esteem; and (3) sex role and locus of control. An interaction between family structure, locus of control, and self-esteem and an interaction between family structure, sex role, and self-esteem were supported.

Foyle, Harvey C.; And Others. (1991). *Cooperative Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom.* NEA Early Childhood Education Series. Washington, DC: National Education Association. ED339489; 124p.

In this book, the methodology of cooperative learning, defined as the teaching strategy that involves children's participation in small group learning activities that promote positive interaction, is applied to early childhood education. The book contains the following chapters: (1) A Rationale for Cooperative Learning with Young Children, which covers appropriate learning environments, the role of cooperative learning, and the role of the teacher; (2) Group Building for Cooperation, including discussions of the need for group building, elements of group-building activities, group evaluation, whole class and paired group-building activities, and resources for group builders; (3) Nurturing Self-Esteem, which includes discussions of safety and security, success in school tasks, the identification of areas of personal strength and interest, group acceptance, and contributions to class success; (4) Social Skills and Cooperative Interaction, including discussions of cooperative interaction and children with special needs; (5) Communicating Effectively, which covers unfinished stories, oral language development, following directions, sharing teams, sharing team starters, thinking out loud together, and manipulatives; (6) Cooperation and Play, including discussions of the teacher's role, benefits, cooperative learning and cooperative play, dramatic play, songs and fingerplays, and resources for teachers; and (7) Making Decisions, which includes suggestions for activities.

Parko, Margie. (1991). *Evaluation of the Self-Esteem through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence (SETCLAE) Program 1989-90*. Report No. 15, Vol. 25. Atlanta, GA: Atlanta Public Schools, Div. of Research, Evaluation, and Data Processing. ED338734; 73p.

This paper evaluates a program for educators, youth workers, and parents in four Atlanta (Georgia) Public Schools designed to teach African American children the positive aspects of their cultural heritage and to increase their self-esteem and desire to learn. Although the Self-Esteem Through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence (SETCLAE) program has been implemented in four schools, this evaluation covers only the two elementary schools, Woodson and Toomer, which participated for a full year. The evaluation, using an experimental/control design with

approximately 600 students, involves the use of two self-esteem instruments, an analysis of Iowa Tests of Basic Skills normal curve equivalent scores in reading and total mathematics, an analysis of the results of a teacher questionnaire, and an analysis of student absences. The evaluation indicates that the instructional program has been only partially implemented. SETCLAE may have a positive effect on student self-esteem, but it has not been found to significantly affect achievement or student absences, with the exception of grade 6. Teachers disagree about whether or not the program accomplishes its goals. The program has no religious aspect and is beneficial for all students regardless of ethnic background. A teacher questionnaire and the SETCLAE Student Profile and sample lessons are appended.

Winkler, Joann B. (1991). *The Use of Peer Facilitators To Enhance Self-Esteem Levels of At-Risk Students.* ED338424; 52p.

This practicum addressed the problems of low self-esteem levels of at-risk students in kindergarten and in grades 3 and 5 through a peer facilitator program. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the OUNCE Attitude Scale, and a Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were used to determine the students' self-esteem levels. Targeted students then participated in a 12-week self-esteem enhancement program. Fifth grade students were trained as peer facilitators to teach eight 20-minute self-esteem lessons, incorporating the sense of magic, to kindergarten and third grade students. Results measured by the OUNCE attitude Scale indicated increased levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. While the results desired for the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were not achieved, sizable gains were noted. The project was well-received by all involved students and it was concluded that the use of peer facilitators can result in improved self-esteem levels.

Hershfield, Marlene. (1991). *Improving Reading Achievement of Chapter 1 Pull-Out Students through Self-Esteem Building Classes Involving Buddy Group and Teacher Participation.* ED337760; 81p.

A practicum attempted to improve the low reading achievement of Chapter 1 students in a low socioeconomic fifth-grade class by implementing a self-esteem building program. Activities were designed in a workbook format to complement class instruction in self-esteem building exercises. An emphasis on critical thinking skills was incorporated into the workbook which also allowed for growth in the affective domain. It was concluded that self-esteem building exercises did make positive changes in reading achievement in many students. The exercises and workbook provided a vehicle to facilitate the formation of cooperative learning groups for reading achievement. (Four graphs and 13 sample workbook pages are attached.)

Keller, Joyce. (1991). *Self-Perception and the Grouping of Gifted Children*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (72nd, Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991). ED334725; 10p.

This study compared the cognitive, social, and global self-perceptions of gifted children, over the course of a school year, in three settings that represented increasingly higher concentration levels of exceptional cognitive ability and for increasingly extensive parts of the day. Subjects were 176 students in grades 3-5 from: (1) traditional heterogeneously mixed classrooms; (2) a continuous progress school district; and (3) a magnet school for math and science. Results indicated that increasing concentrations of high ability students were associated with lower cognitive self-perceptions. There was some indication of higher social perceptions in the magnet school. Overall sense of worth showed no program effects, lending support to its characteristic of being more globally influenced than is self-perception of cognitive ability.

Walker, Elaine M. (1991). *Changing Self-Esteem: The Impact of Self-Esteem Changes on At-Risk Students Achievement*. Newark NJ: Board of Education, Office of Research, Evaluation and Testing. ED334304; 49p.

Participants in a program to raise the academic achievement of at-risk elementary school students in the Newark (New Jersey) School

District by raising their self-esteem showed both increased self-esteem and achievement gains. The program included individual and group counseling sessions, parent participation, and the use of the Toward Affective Development (TAD) system and the Pumsey series. Two hundred seventy at-risk students were randomly assigned to a treatment group and 183 were assigned to a control group that received no treatment. More than three-fourths of the students in both groups were Black, while the remainder were of Hispanic or Portuguese backgrounds. The groups were compared using the following pre- and posttest measures: (1) the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory; (2) attendance; (3) the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS); (4) parent participation; and (5) participation in counseling sessions. The following highlights are discussed: (1) social experiences with peers seemed to have more of an effect on self-esteem than either home or school experiences; (2) academic self-concept was significantly associated with classroom performance for Blacks and males; (3) while the program did have a significant impact on raising overall self-esteem, it did not have a significant impact on academic self-concept; and (4) the high absence rates of older students indicate the need for longer, more intensive intervention with this group.

Simic, Marge; Smith, Carl, Comp. (1990). *Guiding At-Risk Students in the Language Arts Classroom*. Learning Package No. 16. For other learning packages in this series, see CS 212 656-705. Some material in the packet may not be completely legible when reproduced; copies provided are the best available. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ., School of Education. ED333382; 48p.

Originally developed for the Department of Defense Schools (DoDDS) system, this learning package on guiding at-risk students in the language arts classroom is designed for teachers who wish to upgrade or expand their teaching skills on their own. The package includes a comprehensive search of the ERIC database; a lecture giving an overview on the topic; the full text of several papers on the topic; copies of any existing ERIC/RCS publications on the topic; a set of guidelines for completing a goal statement, a reaction paper, and an application project; and an evaluation form.

Greer, Harvey. (1991). *A Middle School Activities Program That Works*. ED332965; 8p.

Middle school students need to develop self-esteem, flexible and inquiring minds, relatively close human relationships, and a sense of belonging and purpose or usefulness. This paper discusses an effective middle school activities program at the Leawood Middle School in Leawood, Kansas, which helps meet these identified needs. The Leawood program includes the following components: an advisor/advisee program coupled with public service projects; student government; interschool athletics; drill team; cheerleading; performing arts; an intramural program; and the PACE (Participatory Activities Create Enjoyment) program. PACE, which is described in detail, combines the components of a school club program with a formal school academic competition program and offers activities that are age level appropriate. All students are involved for a minimum of 25 minutes on every Friday morning of the school year. The activities have proven to be educationally beneficial and participatory in nature. They enhance self-confidence and, in low-stress situations, enable the students to learn about teamwork and the importance of cooperation and mutual support.

Legin-Bucell, Cynthia; And Others. (1990). *Self-Esteem Comparisons among Intellectually Gifted Minority/Non-Minority Junior High Students*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (98th, Boston, MA, August 10-14, 1990). ED332440; 11p.

Differences in self-esteem between 48 minority and 62 nonminority intellectually gifted and 75 intellectually average junior-high students were assessed using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Results indicated a higher level of self-esteem for the gifted students than for the control group. Significant differences were also found to exist between males and females, with males exhibiting higher self-esteem scores. Self-esteem was also significantly higher in the nonminority females than for the minority females. Pre-post self-esteem scores were analyzed for seven minority students participating in an academic enrichment program, but no differences were found as a result of program participation.

Shafer, Jeffrey E. (1990). *Evaluation of an Interdisciplinary Model of Middle School Organization: Its Impact on Student Self Esteem and Basic Skill Achievement, School Year 1989-90. Focus on F. B. Leon Guerrero Middle School.* Guam: Dept. of Education, Agana. ED332296; 143p.

Data collected during the 1989-90 school year reveal that middle schools in Guam exist in name only, with one notable exception. F. B. Leon Guerrero Middle School has implemented an interdisciplinary team model boasting many of the salient features of true middle schools. Leon Guerrero teachers rated the extent their school provided for students' unique social, emotional, academic, and physical needs significantly higher than teachers at other middle schools. Information collected on student self-esteem suggests that Leon Guerrero is doing a creditable job of addressing the social and emotional aspects of student life. Information from the locally constructed Basic Skill Mastery Test in Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics indicates the school is performing adequately in these basic skill areas at the sixth-grade level. Although teacher morale was higher at Guerrero Middle School, morale and satisfaction with worksite conditions at all other middle schools declined. Guerrero stresses participative decision making more than other middle schools. To improve Guam's middle schools, this report recommends that: (1) the director of education immediately convene a high level task force to review the evaluation study and develop action plans; (2) the Territorial Board of Education immediately conduct a detailed policy analysis aimed at incorporating middle school goals and objectives; and (3) policy makers fully support Leon Guerrero's interdisciplinary model. Appendices provide memoranda, sample teacher and student survey instruments, curriculum outlines, and other supportive materials.

Whelan, Wendy Lee. (1989). *Enhancing a Child's Self-Concept.* ED332229; 64p.

A study tested the effect on children's self-concept of 4 weeks of activities intended to foster self-esteem. Subjects, 20 sixth graders from a low socio-economic background were randomly assigned to experimental and control samples. The experimental sample

received training in self-esteem activities, while the control sample did not. Results indicated no significant difference between the two groups. (One table of data and 28 references are attached, and 5 appendixes, including materials from the self-esteem activities, and scores from a self-concept scale, conclude the study.)

Tashakkori, Abbas. (1991). *Racial Differences in the Structure of Self-Esteem in Early Adolescence: An Attitudinal Approach to Measurement and Conceptualization.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991). ED332117; 19p.

This study examined distinctions between self-esteem as a general attitude of self and the underlying self-beliefs which link the self with a positively or negatively valued attribute. It was hypothesized that black adolescents would have higher scores on the general self-esteem measure, but not on all specific self-belief components. Overall self-esteem and self-belief components were measured in a sample of 305 black and 338 white middle school students in two small southern towns. As expected, blacks had significantly higher scores on self-esteem. However, considerable differences emerged between the two groups on a few specific self-belief components. Greatest differences in favor of blacks pertained to self-beliefs about one's appearance and attractiveness, followed by beliefs about one's physical abilities and academic self-beliefs about reading. The reverse direction was present in relation to self-beliefs that reflected control of events. Smaller internal attributions, greater powerlessness, smaller attributions of success and failure to ability, and greater attributions of success or failure to chance and task difficulty among blacks were examples of these. Although the results provide some support for the hypothesis, the support is not as strong as suspected. There is a need for testing other explanations, such as the possibility of using different self-evaluative frames of reference by black and white adolescents.

Heyman, Gail D. (1991). *Young Children's Response to Criticism: Self-Conceptions and Trait Thinking.* Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Seattle, WA, April 18-20, 1991). ED330484; 11p.

A total of 107 children of 5 and 6 years participated in interactive scenarios in which mastery experiences were pitted against external criticism. The 39 percent of children whose positive assessments were undermined by the criticism were more likely than other children to make broad negative inferences from specific information. A large proportion of these children interpreted their performance as reflecting negatively on important traits, including their goodness. In addition, these children were more likely than others to make stable and global judgments concerning the goodness of others. This study provides evidence suggesting that children who have just started school have evaluative self-conceptions that are motivationally relevant. The study also provides evidence that the way in which these children think about general goodness is related to their motivational responses in the face of criticism. Finally, the study provides evidence that at least some children of this age are capable of processing information in the achievement context in active and highly sophisticated ways. At its broadest level, the study suggests that self-conceptions and motivation are related early in development, but the domain of relevant self-conceptions may change as children mature.

Shermis, Michael, Ed. (1991). *Parents Sharing Books: Self-Esteem and Reading*. For a related publication, see ED 324 662. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ., Family Literacy Center. ED329955; 40p.

This booklet focuses on self-esteem, especially as to how reading at home can affect reading and school performance and how poor reading attainment can affect self-esteem. Specific steps to help middle school children gain self-esteem are discussed. Practical questions from parents are answered and activities are described which can be used at home. Books for preteens, teens, and parents are also recommended in the booklet.

Bass, Jo Ann F. (1990). *Emergent Literacy: Ensuring that Students "Emerge" with Self-Esteem Intact*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Reading Forum (11th, Sarasota, FL, December 12-15, 1990). ED328883; 13p.

Reading is an area of the curriculum that contains many opportunities for students to develop self-esteem. Three common procedures used in the classroom, however, are likely to threaten students' self-esteem: required oral reading; team selection and the aspect of competing and declaring winners and losers; and question and answer procedures. Alternatives to required oral reading include one-to-one reading; choral reading using big books and language experience charts; reading along with a tape-recording of a predictable book; "partner reading"; "perfection reading"; and "impress reading." Alternatives to competitive teams include random selection of team members and avoidance of team rankings. Alternatives to traditional question and answer techniques are to ask questions a student can answer; rephrasing the question for the student; giving praise for the part of an answer that is correct; and offering clues. Instructional strategies for fostering self-esteem in beginning readers are dependent upon the teacher. Whenever teachers are unsure as to whether a classroom practice will damage a students' self-esteem, the teachers should ask themselves how they would feel in that situation.

Wasserman, Trudy R. (1988). *Improving First Grade Students' Affective Behavior through Implementing a Self-Esteem Program.* ED327274; 82p.

A 10-week practicum intervention was implemented with 67 first graders at a small, independent, university-run school in order to improve the children's affective behavior by increasing their self-esteem. The program began with a meeting with parents at which they were informed of the school's emphasis on self-esteem. In-service education was conducted among teachers and the school nurse. Students assessed their reprogram level of self-esteem. The program gave students opportunities to explore their senses of identity, belonging, security, purpose, and competence. In postprogram assessments, parents, teachers, and students observed changes in the students' affective behavior. Appendices provide measures, related materials, and references to 12 resources used in the program.

Curry, Nancy E.; Johnson, Carl N. (1990). *Beyond Self-Esteem: Developing a Genuine Sense of Human Value*. Research Monograph, Volume 4. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Photographs may not reproduce clearly. ISBN-0-935989-39-0 ED326316; 184p.

This guidebook rejects a simplistic view of children's development of self-esteem in favor of a perspective that locates the concept in the larger contexts of children's social, cognitive, moral, and personality development. Part I concerns ways in which young children develop a sense of value. A general introduction to the concept of self-esteem is followed by three chapters that relate findings on developmental aspects of self-esteem. These chapters focus on the ways in which infants and toddlers develop and consolidate a sense of self, preschoolers test and evaluate the self, and kindergartners and primary school students set new standards for the self. Part II covers implications of the knowledge base for practitioners. The text concerns ways in which adults can promote self-esteem in children, care for infants and toddlers, guide preschoolers, and teach kindergartners and primary school students in ways that promote the development of self-esteem. A concluding chapter summarizes the discussion and indicates implications for policy. The guidebook's 316 citations include other monographs and related books from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Knight, Joyce L. (1990). *Improve Reading Comprehension and Self-Esteem through the Use of the Writing Process*. ED323559; 44p.

This paper describes a practicum in which a comprehensive daily writing program was implemented to determine the effectiveness of the writing process in improving the self-esteem as well as the reading skills of first-grade students. The target group was 11 first graders who, out of a class of 25 students, had failed the comprehension part of the pre-practicum reading test and were evaluated as having low self-esteem. The target students spent 1 hour daily on some aspect of the writing process working with a team of peers to complete their own books. Getting support and

respect from their group, the students read and wrote their stories over and over again, from prewriting and drafting to editing and "publishing" in student-made books. After the 12-week practicum, students were retested and re-evaluated. Results revealed improvement in reading comprehension scores. All the students passed the posttest, which brought them up to grade level. Results also revealed growth in self-esteem in all but three students, who were learning disabled children. The findings suggest that the writing process could be used in other grade levels to increase reading comprehension. (Twenty references and four appendixes containing the pre/post reading and self-esteem tests and samples of student writing are attached.)

Anderson, Karen M. (1990). *Does Academic Performance Feedback Affect Children's Self-Esteem?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 16-20, 1990). ED318925; 16p.

This study investigated whether academic achievement (as reflected on report cards) would have an effect upon children's self-esteem. Subjects were 46 third- and 40 sixth-grade students. Thirty of the third-graders and 28 of the sixth-graders completed Harter's Self-Perception Profile 2 weeks before report cards were distributed and again the week after report cards had been received. At the second session, students also answered four follow-up questions regarding their reactions to their report cards. A control group of 15 third- and 12 sixth-graders were seen the week after report cards were received and again 2 weeks later, completing the self-esteem profile at both sessions. The findings revealed that self-esteem scores across time were significantly less stable for the third-graders than for the sixth-graders. In general this instability did not appear directly related to report cards. Third-graders had higher responses to three of four follow-up questions regarding reactions to the report cards, suggesting developmental differences in terms of how children react to this form of academic feedback information. A lack of differences in Scholastic Competence change scores between target and control groups suggests that any changes in self-esteem that occurred among target third-graders were not necessarily caused by report cards.

Berndt, Thomas J. (1990). *Relations of Friendships and Peer Acceptance to Adolescents' Self-Evaluations*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 16-20, 1990). ED317307; 14p.

This document reports findings of two studies on relations between: (1) adolescents' peer relationships and their self-esteem; and (2) adolescents' social status and friendships. Participating in the first study were nearly 300 seventh- and eighth-graders who completed Harter's (1985) Self-Perception Profile for Children. This measure includes subscales for students' perceptions of their self-worth, social acceptance, and other aspects of their appearance and accomplishments. Subjects also reported on features of their friendships with up to three close friends. Over 300 children from the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades participated in the second study. These students completed the tasks performed by subjects in the first study and also rated their liking for same-sex, same-grade classmates. On the basis of the peer ratings, students were judged as higher in either popularity or rejection. Findings indicated that friendship and social status are distinct facets of peer relationship. Peers' influence on classmates' sense of self is especially salient in the junior high years. Supplementary data showed that students' academic achievement, achievement motivation, and classroom behavior were only weakly related to their perceived social acceptance, social status, and friendships.

Helge, Doris. (1989). *Report of Pilot Project Regarding Strategies for Enhancing Self-Esteem of At-Risk Students*. Bellingham, WA: National Rural and Small Schools Consortium. ED314678; 20p.

A pilot project was conducted to determine effective strategies for enhancing the self-esteem of "at-risk" students. The project involved middle school students (N=12) from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and ability levels. The students were determined to be "at-risk" for learning because of depression, child abuse, sexual activity, and/or drug use. Curriculum dealt with the issues of self-acceptance, choices, feelings, cooperation, communication skills, relationships, expectations, and personal

responsibility. Through a variety of self-esteem enhancement exercises, the students made significant increases between pre- and post-test scores regarding self-esteem. Their academic scores and attendance rates also increased. Many students opened up emotionally revealing sexual activity, suicidal behavior, molestation, and drug abuse experiences. The purpose of the next project will be to enhance self-esteem of students who are "at-risk" for learning. The project will simultaneously provide support systems for teachers and others in the school system who are involved with the students.

Student Self-Esteem. *The Best of ERIC on Educational Management*, Number 94. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. ED311603; 5p.

This annotated bibliography of 12 publications on student self-esteem includes six research studies that indicate the following: (1) it is the actual ability of students, not their self-concepts of ability, that make the difference in academic success; (2) students who feel strong parental pressure generally have lower self-esteem; (3) self-esteem has a negligible effect on subsequent delinquency, and delinquent behavior itself tends to lower, not raise, self-esteem; (4) there is no significant causal relationship between general self-esteem and academic achievement; (5) self-esteem is caused by prior success in the classroom; and (6) high self-esteem is a consequence of having experienced meaningful successes. Additional publications deal with: measuring self-esteem in early adolescents; steps administrators can take to raise students' self-esteem and to help students in middle-level schools enhance their self-perception; ways to block the no-effort strategy employed by students who have a fear of failure; helping students set meaningful goals that they can attain. Finally, one article argues that healthy self-esteem is based on a realistic assessment of one's self in all its aspects, and accepting the worth and rights of others.

Sherman, Lawrence W.; And Others. (1988). *Multi-Faceted Dimensions of Self-Concept and Personal Control: A Collection of Six Related Studies*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Research Association (Chicago, IL, October 14, 1988). ED311319; 81p.

A series of six papers and an introduction which present the results and tentative analyses of studies investigating such constructs as self-esteem, perceptions of control, and competence are included in this document. These papers are: (1) "Multiple Dimensions of Locus of Control and Their Relationship To Standardized Achievement Scores in Fifth Grade Children" (Lawrence W. Sherman, Richard J. Hofmann, and Patricia O'Meara); (2) "Self Concept of Musically Gifted and Non-gifted Adolescents In Regular and Special High Schools" (Lawrence W. Sherman, Richard J. Hofmann, and Mike Harrison); (3) "Multiple Dimensions of Self-concept and Locus of Control: Their Inter-relationships" (Lawrence W. Sherman, Richard J. Hofmann, and Jeanne Wagoner); (4) "Locus of Control and its Relationship to Self-esteem: A Developmental Association" (Lawrence W. Sherman and Richard J. Hofmann); (5) "A Reanalysis of the Factor Validity of the Coopersmith Child Self-Esteem Measure" (Richard J. Hofmann, Lawrence W. Sherman, and Brian Charleton); and (6) "Measuring Adolescent Self-Esteem: Construct Validity" (Richard J. Hofmann and Larry Sherman, and Ann Schmitt). Five pages of references for the studies are included. The appendix includes these study instruments: incomplete sentences, questionnaire for adolescents concerning feelings about themselves, the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, and the Multi-dimensional Multi-attributional Causality Scale.

Haltiwanger, Jane. (1989). *Behavioral Referents of Presented Self-Esteem in Young Children.* Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Kansas City, MO, April 27-30, 1989). ED310854; 17p.

In two studies which were designed to identify behavioral manifestations of self-esteem, experienced teachers were asked to perform a criterion sort of an 84-item behavioral Q-set, with high and low self-esteem as the criteria. Aims included: (1) identification of classroom behaviors of preschool children associated with self-esteem; (2) application of common referents to the development of a behavioral rating measure; and (3) identification of defining features of presented self-esteem and of its ability to discriminate self-esteem and related personality constructs. Results provided evidence of a high level of agreement

about common referents to the term "self-esteem." Items selected as criteria for presented self-esteem were analyzed for conceptual groups, and several dimensions were identified. Referents to self-esteem in preschoolers were unlike those for older subjects. Confidence was a central theme, but competence was not. Findings also suggested that high and low self-esteem were not simple opposites. High self-esteem was associated with confident approach, and the behavior was associated with secure attachment. In contrast, low self-esteem was associated with negative social interactions. Findings led to the development of a behavior rating scale for use in indexing presented self-esteem.

Zevin, Dale; McPherson, Carole. (1989). *Into Adolescence: Enhancing Self-Esteem. A Curriculum for Grades 5-8*. Contemporary Health Series. ISBN-0-941816-63-X. ED307276; 83p.

This book is a 10-lesson module for grades 5-8, designed to increase students' awareness of self-esteem as a dynamic, ever-changing component in their lives. Beginning with a "Full Esteem Ahead" lesson to help students identify high and low self-esteem behaviors, this module gives teachers specific instructional strategies for guiding students through a series of esteem-building exercises and group activities. The module: (1) helps students develop and achieve personal self-esteem goals; (2) examines how self-esteem can make one feel powerful and in control; (3) discusses how the media can influence self-esteem; (4) draws the connection between self-esteem and social responsibility; (5) identifies positive self-talk and affirmations as among the methods for building self-esteem; and (6) provides a framework for a self-esteem fitness program.

Anderson, Karen M. (1989). *The Usefulness of Importance Ratings in Predicting the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Self-Concept Scores*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Kansas City, MO, April 27-30, 1989). ED307042; 13p.

A study was conducted to examine the usefulness of importance ratings in predicting the relationship between: (1) overall self-

esteem and more specific subscale scores of self-esteem; and (2) domain-specific self-esteem scores and domain-specific self-concept scores. Subjects were 70 children attending third, fourth, and fifth grades of a public elementary school in San Jose, California. Self-report measures employed were Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire and a modified version of Harter's Self-Perception Profile. For each of Harter's original 30 domain-specific items, excluding the global self-worth items, an importance item was also written and included directly after the original item. Findings indicated that use of importance ratings to weight domain-specific self-esteem scores did not result in a stronger relationship to global self-esteem. Third graders seemed to be less stable than fourth and fifth graders in self-perceptions and self-esteem. Fifth graders, in contrast, seemed to have both more accurate self-perceptions and a greater grasp of the importance of scholastic achievement as it relates to overall self-esteem.

Matiella, Ana Consuelo. (1988). *La Familia: Student Workbook. Latino Family Life Education Curriculum Series.* For curriculum unit, see UD 026 620. ISBN-0-941816-70-2. ED303544; 90p.

This workbook comprises eight lessons designed to enhance the self-esteem of Latino students, grades 5 through 8, through the exploration of family, family traditions and values, and the affirmation of family strengths. Each lesson begins with an illustration that reflects the content of the lesson and an introductory page. Each introductory page contains the following: (1) a "dicho," a saying used to express and pass on values and beliefs in Latino families; (2) a summary of the lesson; and (3) the "Sabes Que?," intended to provide another small bit of information on Latino family traditions that will strengthen understanding of different Latino customs that have to do with family life and customs. All the student materials necessary to complete the lesson are presented, including the following: (1) stories; (2) student activity sheets; and (3) blank note pages. A chart illustrating changes in Latino families in the United States is also included. The appendices comprise the following: (1) a list of "dichos"; (2) a Spanish word list; and (3) a glossary of special terms.

Matiella, Ana Consuelo. (1988). *La Familia: Curriculum Unit. Latino Family Life Education Curriculum Series*. For student workbook, see UD 026 621. ISBN-0-941816-69-9. ED303543; 152p.

This teaching guide comprises eight lessons designed to enhance the self-esteem of Latino students, grades 5 through 8, through the exploration of family, family traditions and values, and the affirmation of family strengths. Student objectives include the following: (1) define family; (2) describe similarities and differences among Latino families and mainstream culture families; (3) explain that there is great diversity in families and that families can function successfully in different ways; (4) describe the family's role in developing a sense of values; (5) explain how family role models and values contribute a sense of family pride and self-esteem; (6) identify family traditions that contribute to a sense of family and cultural pride; and (7) demonstrate ways culture can affect how families function. Key components of each lesson include the following: (1) Spanish "dicho," a proverb; (2) background and rationale; (3) teacher preparation; (4) time; (5) outline of activities; (6) procedure; (7) summary; (8) homework; and (9) student activity sheets. The appendices include the following: (1) Historical and Ethnographic Profile of Latino or Hispanic Groups in the United States; (2) Latino Presence in the United States: Demographic Trends and Family Life Issues; (3) student workbook features; (4) a Spanish word list; (5) a glossary of special terms; and (6) a list of references.

Matiella, Ana Consuelo. (1988). *Cultural Pride: Student Workbook. Latino Family Life Education Curriculum Series*. For curriculum unit, see UD 026 618. ISBN-0-941816-68-0. ED303542; 92p.

This student workbook is comprised of 11 lessons to help Latino students, grades 5 through 8, develop self-esteem through cultural pride. Each lesson begins with an illustration that reflects the content of the lesson, and an introductory page. The introductory page includes the following: (1) a "dicho," a proverb or saying used to pass on cultural values in Latino families; (2) a summary

of the lesson; and (3) the "Sabes Que?," an additional small bit of information that will strengthen the student's perception of Latino diversity and accomplishment. All the material necessary to complete the lesson is included, including the following: (1) stories; (2) "cuentos," legends or stories that are passed on from generation to generation; (3) vignettes; (4) student activity sheets; and (5) blank note pages. A map of Latinos in the United States is also included. The Appendices include the following: (1) a list of "dichos"; (2) in-depth narrations of three celebrations, "El Dia de Los Tres Reyes Magos," "Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe," and "Dia de Los Muertos"; (3) a Spanish word list; and (4) a glossary of special terms.

Matiella, Ana Consuelo. (1988). *Cultural Pride: Curriculum Unit. Latino Family Life Education Curriculum Series*. For student workbook, see UD 026 619. ISBN-0-941816-67-2. ED303541; 161p.

This family life education teaching unit comprises 11 lessons whose primary purpose is to help Latino students, grades 5 through 8, identify cultural pride as a source of self-esteem. Student activities include the following: (1) describe how being part of a cultural group contributes to a sense of uniqueness; (2) identify cultural similarities and differences; (3) identify personal, familial and community qualities that contribute to cultural pride; (4) compare various ways culture is expressed in different kinds of settings; (5) explain how belonging to a cultural group contributes to one's sense of power and confidence; (6) describe how role models can enhance self-esteem; (7) explain how identification with a cultural group contributes to a sense of belonging; (8) define integration as it contrasts with assimilation; (9) explain the importance of accepting differences in a way to diminish prejudice and discrimination; and (10) identify ways to celebrate self through culture. Key components of each lesson include the following: (1) a Spanish "dicho" (proverb); (2) background and rationale; (3) teacher preparation; (4) time; (5) outline of activities; (6) procedure; (7) summary; (8) homework; and (9) student activity sheets. The appendices include the following: (1) Historical and Ethnographic Profile of Latino or Hispanic Ethnic Groups in the

United States; (2) Latino Presence in the United States: Demographic Trends and Family Life Issues; (3) student workbook features; (4) a Spanish word list; (5) a glossary of special terms; and (6) a list of 20 references.

Kearns, John. (1988). *The Impact of Systematic Feedback on Student Self-Esteem.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988). One graph is marginally legible. ED293897; 34p.

A controlled study investigated the impact of systematic praise techniques on 145 sixth-grade students' self-esteem. Eighty-five students comprised the experimental group, and 60 students made up the control group. The study was initiated in order to explore the link between self-esteem and academic achievement. The attempt to increase student self-esteem consisted of having the classroom teacher follow specific guidelines in providing feedback to students and focusing feedback on student accomplishment in skill areas as opposed to areas of academic achievement. The students were assessed using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Canadian Tests of Basic Skills. Data were analyzed via a correlated t-test and a two-way analysis of variance to determine differences attributable to the experimental program developed. Results support the notion that gains in self-esteem are likely to be attributable to positive feedback by instructors.

Priest, Delma L. (1988). *Increasing Teacher Awareness of the Importance of Self-Esteem in Primary Grade Children through Training Sessions.* ED293653; 87p.

Implemented in an elementary school with a majority of Hispanic students in a low-income community of a large midwest city, this practicum aimed to aid primary grade teachers understand the importance of self-esteem in the development of primary grade students. Practicum goals were to: (1) provide teachers with information about self-esteem to help them better understand the importance of their role; (2) provide practical information enabling teachers to demonstrate skills in fostering children's positive self-

esteem; and (3) provide teachers with information to increase their knowledge of the developmental state and cognitive levels of primary grade children. To attain these goals, 10 training sessions were implemented, a teacher handbook and a children's activity book were produced, and recommended literature for children and teachers were identified. Evaluation data demonstrated the success of the intervention. Related materials, such as measures employed, lists of positive comments and messages, and outlines of training sessions are appended.

Blake, Susan M. (1988). *The Effect of Bibliotherapy on the Self-Esteem of Sixth Graders*. ED293101; 44p.

A study tested the hypothesis that the self-esteem of a group of six sixth graders would be raised through the employment of a bibliotherapeutic program. Self-esteem was measured before and after the program by the "Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory for Children Form A." The subjects, who were from low, average, and above average reading groups, participated in independent silent reading, group oral reading, and group discussion of the children's novel "Shadow of a Bull" by Maia Wojciechowska. Forty-five minute meetings were held after school once a week for a six-week period. Results (a table of data is included) showed that while four students experienced gains, raising their posttest raw scores one to five points, one student experienced a decrease of two points, and another student's score was equivalent to that of the pretest. A comparison of the means of the pre- and posttest results shows that the study's hypothesis was supported by the modest, but not statistically significant, increase in scores. (An extensive review of related literature on bibliotherapy, 54 references, and students' pre- and posttest scores are attached.)

Journal Articles

Johnson, Christopher. (1993). Self-Esteem: From the inside Out. *Momentum*, 24(1), 59-62. EJ458068

Argues that students' self-esteem must come from within. Provides strategies to help teachers create a classroom environment that allows students to build their own self-esteem, including (1) encouraging instead of praising; (2) building self-reliance; (3) creating a positive atmosphere of belonging; (4) recognizing individuality; and (5) modeling self-esteem.

Bullock, Janis R. (1993). Children's Loneliness and Their Relationships with Family and Peers. *Family Relations*, 42(1), 46-49. EJ457004

Children's feelings of loneliness related to family and peer relationships have only recently been documented by researchers. These feelings are now being recognized, researched, and assessed in children as young as five years of age. Helping professionals need to understand short- and long-term consequences of children's loneliness as it relates to their personal well-being and self-esteem.

Cramer, Phoebe; Skidd, Jody E. (1992). Correlates of Self-Worth in Preschoolers: The Role of Gender-Stereotyped Styles of Behavior. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 26(9-10), 369-90. For related documents, see UD 516 708-712. EJ449496

Results of a story-completion study with 47 white middle class preschoolers (23 males and 24 females) confirm the hypotheses that gender-stereotyped styles of social interaction are apparent as early as the preschool years, and use of gender-stereotypes behaviors is associated with the child's perceived competence and social support.

Braucht, Stephanie; Weime, Barbara. (1992). The School Counselor as Consultant on Self-Esteem: An Example. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 26(3), 229-36. EJ442645

Describes development of in-service workshop for teachers on self-esteem which included two videos, chamber theater, bibliographic review, discussion of the principles of Rational-Emotive Therapy, and reception. Encourages school counselors to consider consultation in the form of an in-service program.

Hoge, Dean R.; And Others. (1990). School Experiences Predicting Changes in Self-Esteem of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 117-27. EJ442301

The influence of school experiences on student self-esteem was explored in a longitudinal study of 322 sixth and seventh graders. School experiences affected self-esteem, although the impact varied from year to year and discipline to discipline. Overall climate and teacher feedback influenced academic and global self-esteem.

Cutright, Melitta C. (1992). Self-Esteem: The Key to a Child's Success and Happiness. *PTA Today*, 17(4), 5-6. EJ442271

Discussing self-esteem as the key to parenting a successful, happy child, this article notes ways parents can help foster self-esteem starting at a very early age. Ten suggestions for building a child's self-esteem, developed by the National PTA, are listed.

Beane, James A. (1991). Enhancing Children's Self-Esteem: Illusion and Possibility. *Early Education and Development*, 2(2), 153-60. EJ441905

Current efforts to enhance children's self-esteem are critiqued, and an alternative direction is proposed that is based on the notion of self-esteem as a crucial aspect of human dignity. This approach connects self-esteem to both cultural and social conditions and works toward the reconstruction of school and society.

Morvitz, Edward; Motta, Robert W. (1992). Predictors of Self-Esteem: The Roles of Parent-Child Perceptions, Achievement, and Class Placement. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 25(1), 72-80. EJ441366

This study of students in grades 3-6 found that, for learning-disabled students in self-contained placements, subjects' perception of maternal and paternal acceptance plus subjects' academic achievement accounted for 58 percent of variance in subjects' self-esteem. These variables were not significantly correlated with the self-esteem of non-special-education students.

Stroud, Judith E. (1992). Transitional Classrooms: Background for Kindergarten Teachers Considering Recommendations for Next Year Placements. *Dimensions*, 20(2), 25-26. EJ440030

Discusses the philosophy behind the effects of placing at-risk kindergarten children in transitional first grade classes and suggests alternative practices.

Gwin, Joseph. (1990). Self-Esteem vs. Academic Excellence: Are the Two on a Collision Course? *Crisis*, 97(10), 16-18, 21. EJ436996

True self-esteem for black children must mean more than teaching them to feel good about themselves. It must be based on an understanding that self-respect is earned through effort. Unrealistic self-esteem can impair the ability to improve one's life.

Damon, William. (1991). Putting Substance into Self-Esteem: A Focus on Academic and Moral Values. *Educational Horizons*, 70(1), 12-18. EJ435351

Too strong an emphasis on the development of self-esteem in young children can lead to the tyranny of self-centeredness with the ultimate result being badly adjusted adults. Without an objective moral referent, children cannot acquire a stable sense of right and wrong.

Wigfield, Allan; And Others. (1991). Transitions during Early Adolescence: Changes in Children's Domain-Specific Self-Perceptions and General Self-Esteem across the Transition to Junior High School. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(4), 552-65. EJ434858

Examined young adolescents' self-perception of achievement and their self-esteem during the transition to junior high school. Self-esteem scores declined during the transition but increased during seventh grade. Self-concepts of ability for math, English, and social activities declined after the transition.

Sheridan, Margaret K. (1991). Increasing Self-Esteem and Competency in Children. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 23(1), 28-35. EJ430377

Discusses the influence of culture and family and the importance of self-esteem in the development of competency in young children. Describes the role of the teacher in creating a developmentally appropriate environment that fosters self-initiated learning and a personal locus of control.

Cooley, Michele R.; And Others. (1991). Peer Acceptance and Self Concept of Black Students in a Summer Gifted Program. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 14(2), 166-77. EJ425631

Thirty-five high-ability Black students (ages 9-15) attending a predominantly White university summer enrichment program were compared to 35 White peers. Results suggest that, despite differences in achievement and social status, Black students were accepted by White peers and were comparable in self-concept and academic self-esteem.

Clark, Jolene; Tollefson, Nona. (1991). Differences in Beliefs and Attitudes toward the Improvability of Writing of Gifted Students Who Exhibit Mastery-Oriented and Helpless Behaviors. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 14(2), 119-33. EJ425628

On measures of ability to improve writing quality, motivation to write, confidence in writing, and attitudes toward writing, 29 middle level students classified as mastery oriented consistently scored higher than 21 students classified as helpless. The 66

students classified as neither mastery oriented nor helpless had mean scores between the other 2 groups.

Avoid the Multicultural "Tourist Trap." (1991). *School Administrator*, 48(4), 17-19. EJ422871

The multicultural approach to teaching students about diversity is out of touch because it fails to represent American life adequately or teach techniques for dealing with bias. Instead of turning children into uncomprehending "tourist," the antibias approach spans the curriculum and emphasizes developmental appropriateness and self-esteem.

Hoge, Robert D.; McSheffrey, Robert. (1991). An Investigation of Self-Concept in Gifted Children. *Exceptional Children*, 57(3), 238-45. EJ421433

The study found relative independence of the specific components of self-concept in 200 gifted pupils enrolled in self-contained enrichment classes in grades 5 through 8. Self-perceptions of social and scholastic competence and of physical appearance were the major contributors to self-concept. There was no evidence of a developmental process.

Chiu, Lian-Hwang. (1990). Self-Esteem of Gifted, Normal, and Mild Mentally Handicapped Children. *Psychology in the Schools*, 27(3), 263-68. EJ419714

Administered Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) Form B to elementary school students (N=450) identified as gifted, normal, and mild mentally handicapped (MiMH). Results indicated that both the gifted and normal children had significantly higher self-esteem than did the MiMH children, but there were no differences between gifted and normal children.

Ford, Bridgie Alexis; Jones, Charles. (1990). Ethnic Feelings Book: Created by Students with Developmental Handicaps. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 22(4), 36-39. EJ410371

Intermediate-grade African-American students with developmental handicaps participated in a project to enhance their self-perceptions related to their ethnicity. As a class, the students produced an ethnic feelings book that encompassed both factual information about African Americans and students' interpretations of their ancestors' feelings during certain periods.

Rotheram-Borus, Mary Jane; Phinney, Jean S. (1990). Patterns of Social Expectations among Black and Mexican-American Children. Thematic Issue on Minority Children. *Child Development*, 61(2), 542-56. EJ409146

In two studies, a total of 213 Black and Mexican-American elementary school children were asked to respond to 8 videotaped scenes of everyday social encounters that occur at school. Actors were unfamiliar peers from the same ethnic group as the subjects.

Matthews, Doris B.; Odom, Barbara Lin. (1989). Anxiety: A Component of Self-Esteem. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 24(2), 153-59. EJ408170

Investigated relationship between anxiety and self-esteem of a group of middle school children, many of whom were Black. Findings from 53 sixth and seventh graders support hypothesis that there would be significant inverse relationship between measures of anxiety (state and trait) and measures of self-esteem of preadolescent students.

Morse, Carole Lynn; Bockoven, Jerry. (1989). Improving the Efficacy of DUSO-R through the Use of a Children's Intake Interview. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 24(2), 102-11. EJ408164

Examined effects of children's intake interviews on success in Developing Understanding of Self and Others-Revised (DUSO-R) program. Findings were moderately supportive of hypothesis that children whose intake interview information was shared with group leaders score higher on self-esteem than do children who are either not interviewed or whose interview information is not shared.

Stafford, William B.; Hill, Judith D. (1989) Planned Program to Foster Positive Self-Concepts in Kindergarten Children. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 24(1), 47-57. EJ403514

Assessed changes resulting from elementary school counseling program by comparing kindergartners (N=125) receiving program with group of kindergartners (N=23) who did not. Results indicated there were no significant differences in self-concept between kindergartners receiving the counseling treatment and those who did not.

Greenberg, Polly. Ideas that Work with Young Children. Why Not Academic Preschool? (Part 1). *Young Children*, 45(2), 70-80. EJ402929

Discusses two contrasting philosophies of education for three-, four-, and five-year-old children: the developmentally appropriate approach to learning and the academic or behavior modification approach. Discusses the manner in which preschool children learn self-esteem and self-discipline in both educational settings.

Mitchum, Nancy Taylor. (1989). Increasing Self-Esteem in Native-American Children. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 23(4), 266-71. EJ396283

Discusses effects of school experiences, cultural differences affecting self-esteem, and group counseling for native-American children. Describes desirable characteristics of counselors for these students. Concludes that counselors can perhaps be of greatest help to these students by incorporat-ing the unique values of their culture into the group counseling process.

Locke, Don C. (1989). Fostering the Self-Esteem of African-American Children. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 23(4), 254-59. EJ396281

Focuses on fostering self-esteem of African-American children. Offers guidelines for elementary school counselors as necessary

attitudes or behaviors that will help foster multiculturalism and describes seven guidance activities for putting guidelines into action. Recommends evaluation of these programs by observing how students behave.

Marshall, Hermine H. (1989). The Development of Self-Concept. *Young Children*, 44(5), 44-51. EJ394075

This review of research on the development of self-concept in young children defines and differentiates the various dimensions of self-concept; notes problems associated with measuring self-concept; comments on the relationship between cognitive development and self-concept, and discusses external factors related to self-concept development.

Fraser, J. A. H.; Gurney, P. W. (1988). Peers Versus Parents: The Salience of Perceived Sources of Self-esteem Among Three- to Five-year-olds. *Early Child Development and Care*, 30(1-4), 17-30. EJ384454

Studies the perceived source of self-esteem among 300 children aged three to five. Results indicate that peers are the predominant source of self-esteem in the low intensity ("like") condition and parents are the predominant source of self-esteem in the high intensity ("love") condition.

Greenberg, Polly. (1989). Ideas that Work With Young Children. Learning Self-Esteem and Self-Discipline through Play. *Young Children*, 44(2), 28-31. EJ382663

Describes learning that takes place during children's play. Scenarios involve a 15-month-old who tries to work keys into a sideboard, a 2 1/2-year-old who takes a truck from other children, and a 4-year-old who plays with blocks with other children.

Omizo, Michael M.; Omizo, Sharon A. (1988). The Effects of Participation in Group Counseling Sessions on Self-Esteem and Locus of Control among Adolescents from Divorced Families. *School Counselor*, 36(n1), 54-60. EJ381597

Examined efficacy of group counseling for adolescents from divorced families, investigating effects of participation in group sessions on adolescents' self-esteem and locus of control orientation. Results indicated that, compared to controls (N=30), program participants (N=30) had higher post-test levels of self-esteem and possessed a more internal perception of locus of control orientation.

Avoiding "Me against You" Discipline. (1988). *Young Children*, 44(1), 24-29. EJ380642

Maintains that the methods of discipline used by parents and other primary caregivers affect the young child's self-esteem. Provides a guide to methods of discipline that help young children develop a sense of self-esteem.

Stewart, Michael J.; Corbin, Charles B. (1988). Feedback Dependence Among Low Confidence Preadolescent Boys and Girls. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 59(2), 160-64. EJ379376

Investigation of differences between male and female students' reactions to receiving or not receiving performance feedback indicated that both sexes showed lower self-confidence when they did not receive feedback and that lack of self-confidence impaired the performance of males more than females. Participants were 111 fifth- and sixth-grade students.

Clapp, Betty. (1988). Children's Self-Esteem: The Verbal Environment. *Childhood Education*, 65(1), 29-32. EJ379153

Maintains that the manner in which adult participants in early childhood programs create the verbal environment in the classroom dictates children's estimation of self-worth. Presents the characteristics of negative and positive verbal environments, the importance of a positive verbal environment, and steps for establishing a positive verbal environment.

Hingsburger, David. (1988). Teach Your Children Well. *Exceptional Parent*, 18(6), 84-86, 88-89. EJ378803

Parents should realize the importance of being their child's first teacher and should project an attitude of respect in helping children acquire skills while maintaining self-esteem. The five basic tools necessary for teaching children include: nonjudgmental feedback, task analysis, starting with the last step first, prompting, and praise.

Positive Self-Image: More than Mirrors. IDEAS THAT WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. (1988). *Young Children*, 43(4), 57-59. EJ372502

Maintains that a positive self-image is of vital importance to a person who is to be successful in life, and is the most important gift parents, teachers, and caregivers can give a child. Also provides examples of how one can help build a child's self-image.

Clapp, Betty. (1988). Black History: It's More than American. *Instructor*, 97(6), 50-53. EJ371270

A museum director makes a case for the positive relationship between African-American awareness and self-esteem. Ways in which history should be taught to enhance students' knowledge, self-awareness, and pride are suggested.

Applegate, Mauree. (1988). Expressing the Self. *Childhood Education*, 64(4), 225-29. EJ370911

Considers how educational practices may be disintegrating children's development of a sense of a self that strives toward integrity and wholeness. Focuses on the current overemphasis on homogeneous grouping and IQ tests, the dullness of modern textbooks, and the lack of encouragement of critical thinking skills.

Hadley, Helen R. (1988). Improving Reading Scores through a Self-Esteem Intervention Program. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 22(3), 248-52. EJ370036

Examined impact of 12-week affective education program for second grade students presented to three classrooms; four classrooms serving as control did not receive the intervention. Results indicated there was a significant program impact on academic growth, specifically the Stanford Achievement Test reading scores, although mean scores on self-concept measure did not demonstrate a significant increase.

Morse, Carol Lynn; And Others. (1988). Effects of DUSO-2 and DUSO-2-Revised on Children's Social Skills and Self-Esteem. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 22(3), 199-205. EJ370030

Results of the second research project in the Oregon Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO)-2-Revised Research Studies Series suggest that the DUSO-type programs may be imperfect tools for building a complete cognitive, affective, and behavioral structure for developing self-esteem and social skills.

Cheney, Christine O.; And Others. (1988). Teacher Touch and Children's Self-Esteem: A Pilot Study. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 26(3), 118-26. EJ369930

Examined whether relationship existed between increased amounts of teacher touch and students' self-esteem in third grade students (N=165). Although positive changes were observed in student self-esteem from the pretest to the posttest measurements in both experimental and control groups, no significant differences between the groups were found.

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ERIC/EECE
University of Illinois
805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801-4897
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Fax: 217-333-3767
Email:ericeece@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu